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THE WRITINGS OF
HENRY DAVID THOREAU

JOURNAL

EDITED BY BRADFORD TORREY

IX

AUGUST 16, 1856–AUGUST 7, 1857

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN AND COMPANY

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JOURNAL

VOLUME IX

THE JOURNAL OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU

VOLUME IX

I

AUGUST, 1856 (ÆT. 39)

Aug. 16. 8 A. M. — To Cassia Field.

Chenopodium hybridum, a tall rank weed, five feet at least, dark-green, with a heavy (poisonous?) odor compared to that of stramonium; great maple(?)-shaped leaves. How deadly this peculiar heavy odor! *Diplopappus linariifolius*, apparently several days.

Ambrosia pollen now begins to yellow my clothes.

Cynoglossum officinale, a long time, mostly gone to seed, at Bull's Path and north roadside below Lepleman's. Its great radical leaves made me think of smooth mullein. The flower has a very peculiar, rather sickening odor; Sophia thought like a warm apple pie just from the oven (I did not perceive this). A pretty flower, however. I thoughtlessly put a handful of the nutlets into my pocket with my handkerchief. But it took me a long time to pick them out [of] my handkerchief when I got home, and I pulled out many threads in the process.

At roadside opposite Leighton's, just this side his

barn, *Monarda fistulosa*, wild bergamot, nearly done, with terminal whorls and fragrance mixed of balm and summer savory.[1] The petioles are not ciliated like those on Strawberry Hill road.

Am surprised to find the cassia so obvious and abundant. Can see it yellowing the field twenty-five rods off, from top of hill. It is perhaps the prevailing shrub over several acres of moist rocky meadow pasture on the brook; grows in bunches, three to five feet high (from the ground this year), in the neighborhood of alders, hardhack, elecampane, etc. The lower flowers are turning white and going to seed, — pods already three inches long, — a few upper not yet opened. It resounds with the hum of bumblebees. It is branched above, some of the half-naked (of leaves) racemes twenty inches long by five or six wide. Leaves alternate, of six or eight pairs of leafets and often an odd one at base, locust-like. Looked as if they had shut up in the night. Mrs. Pratt says they do.[2] E. Hoar says she has known it here since she was a child.

The cynoglossum by roadside opposite, and, by side of tan-yard, the apparently true *Mentha viridis*, or spearmint, growing very rankly in a dense bed, some four feet high, spikes rather dense, one to one and a half inches long, stem often reddish, leaves nearly sessile. Say August 1st at least.

Some elecampane with the cassia is six feet high, and blades of lower leaves twenty inches by seven or nine.

[1] Apparently the same kind in Loring's yard.

[2] I observe it myself.

What a variety of old garden herbs — mints, etc. — are naturalized along an old settled road, like this to Boston which the British travelled! And then there is the site, apparently, of an old garden by the tan-yard, where the spearmint grows so rankly. I am intoxicated with the fragrance. Though I find only one new plant (the cassia), yet old acquaintances grow so rankly, and the spearmint intoxicates me so, that I am bewildered, as it were by a variety of new things. An infinite novelty. All the roadside is the site of an old garden where fragrant herbs have become naturalized, — hounds-tongue, bergamot, spearmint, elecampane, etc. I see even the tiger lily, with its bulbs, growing by the roadside far from houses (near Leighton's graveyard). I think I have found many new plants, and am surprised when I can reckon but one. A little distance from my ordinary walk and a little variety in the growth or luxuriance will produce this illusion. By the discovery of one new plant all bounds seem to be infinitely removed.

Amphicarpæa some time; pods seven eighths of an inch long. *Mimulus ringens* four feet high, and chelone six feet high!

Am frequently surprised to find how imperfectly water-plants are known. Even good shore botanists are out of their element on the water. I would suggest to young botanists to get not only a botany-box but a boat, and know the water-plants not so much from the shore as from the water side.

White morning-glory up the Assabet. I find the dog's-bane (*Apocynum androsæmifolium*) bark not

nearly so strong as that of the *A. cannabinum*. *Amaranthus hypochondriacus*, how long?

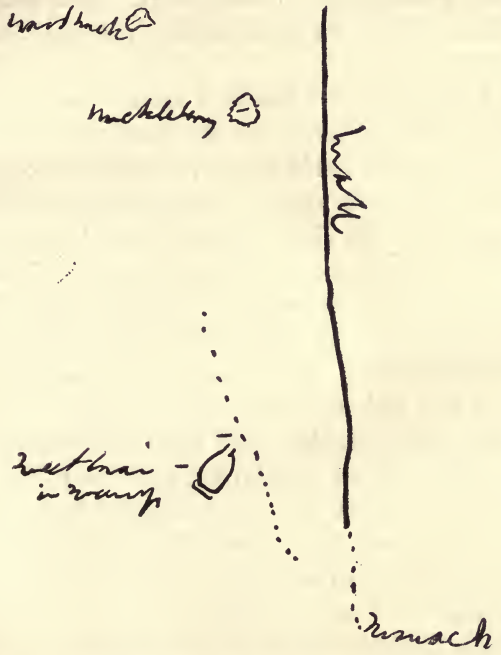
Minott says that the meadow-grass will be good for nothing after the late overflow, when it goes down. The water has *steamed* the grass. I see the rue all turned yellow by it prematurely. Bathing at Merrick's old place, am surprised to find how swift the current. Raise the river two feet above summer level and let it be running off, and you can hardly swim against it. It has fallen about fifteen inches from the height.

My plants in press are in a sad condition; mildew has invaded them during the late damp weather, even those that were nearly dry. I find more and other plants than I counted on. Very bad weather of late for pressing plants. Give me the dry heat of July. Even growing leaves out of doors are spotted with fungi now, much more than mine in press.

Aug. 17. P. M. — Walked with Minot Pratt behind his house.

Hypericum Canadense well out at 2 P. M. *Ludwigia alternifolia* still with red or scarlet calyx-lobes to the seed, roadside this side H. Shattuck's. *Aster miser* some time, turned purple. *A. longifolius* not long. *Hieracium Canadense*. Pratt describes finding one or two small yellowish plants on the edge of his field under the hill, like a polygala, but twice as large, stiff, and points of the flowers turned down [?]; leaf clover-like, three-foliate. Russell had suggested genista. He has in his garden the mountain fringe (*Adlumia cirrhosa*), which grows in Maine and he thought in

the western part of this State. Also wood geranium (*G. dissectum* (Big.)) from Fitzwilliam, though Gray seems to think that the *Carolinianum* has been mistaken for it. *Rhus copallina* already going to seed by the wall, apparently on what was W. E. C.'s ground. Saw again the red huckleberry and the white hardhack. I think this the lay of the land:—



The red huckleberry is as easily distinguished in the green state as when ripe. It is then red with a white cheek, often slightly pear-shaped, semitransparent with a lustre, very finely and indistinctly white-dotted. I do

not perceive any very marked peculiarity in the bush, unless that the recent twigs are red. The last year's a peculiar ochreous color and the red buds in the axils larger. It might be called *Gaylussacia resinosa* var. *erythrocarpa.*

Aug. 18. P. M. — To Beck Stow's.

Now, perhaps, get thoroughwort. The lecheas in the Great Fields are now turning red, especially the fine one.

As I go along the hillsides in sprout-lands, amid the *Solidago stricta,* looking for the blackberries left after the rain, the sun warm as ever, but the air cool nevertheless, I hear the *steady* (not intermittent) shrilling of apparently the alder cricket, clear, loud, and autumnal, a season sound. Hear it, but see it not. It reminds me of past autumns and the lapse of time, suggests a pleasing, thoughtful melancholy, like the sound of the flail. Such preparation, such an outfit has our life, and so little brought to pass!

Hear a *faint*-warbling bird amid birches and pines. Clear-yellow throat and breast, greenish-yellow head, conspicuous white bar on wings, white beneath, forked tail, bluish legs. Can it be pine warbler? The note, *thus faint,* is not like it.

See black and white creeper.

Yellow Bethlehem-star yet, and indigo.

Saw yesterday and some days before a monster aphis some five eighths of an inch long on a huckleberry leaf. I mistook it, as before, for a sort of loose-spun cocoon. It was obovate, indistinctly ribbed, of

long, loose, white, streaming down, but being touched it recoiled and, taken off the leaf, rolled itself into a ball. The father of all the aphides. *Œnothera pumila* still.

Aug. 19. P. M. — To Fair Haven Hill.

Dog-day weather as for clouds, but less smoky than before the rains of ten days ago. I see *Hypericum Canadense* and *mutilum* abundantly open at 3 P. M. Apparently they did not bear the dry, hot weather of July so well. They are apparently now in prime, but the *Sarothra* is not open at this hour. The *perforatum* is quite scarce now, and apparently the *corymbosum;* the *ellipticum* quite done. The small hypericums have a peculiar smart, somewhat lemon-like fragrance, but bee-like.

The dangle-berries in Hubbard's Grove have a peculiar, not very pleasant, flavor and a tough skin. I see white buds on swamp-pink, just formed, also green checkerberries about grown.

In the radula swamp the sweet scent of clethra;[1] some peculiarly bright orange toadstools with a wavy edge. Now for spotted aralia leaves, brown pupils with yellow iris amid the green.

The whorled polygala is a plant almost universally dispersed but inconspicuous.

I spent my afternoon among the desmodiums and lespedezas, sociably. The further end of Fair Haven Hill-side is a great place for them.

All the lespedezas are apparently more open and

[1] Which lasts ten days at least.

delicate in the woods, and of a darker green, especially the violet ones. When not too much crowded, their leaves are very pretty and perfect.

Ivy berries dry and apparently ripe on the rocks (*Toxicodendron*).

Low blueberries, though some are a very little wilted, are very sweet and good as well as abundant. Huckleberries getting to be suspected. What countless varieties of low blackberries! Here, in this open pine grove, I pluck some large fresh and very sweet ones when they are mostly gone without. So they are continued a little longer to us.

Lobelia spicata still.

The wind rises and the pasture thistle down is blown about.

Lespedezas and desmodiums are now generally in prime. The latter are an especially interesting family, with commonly such delicate, spreading panicles, the plants themselves in their distribution so scattered and inobvious, and the open and spreading panicle of commonly verdigris-green flowers (in drying) make them to be unobserved when you are near them. The panicle of flowers often as large or larger than all the rest of the plant, with their peculiar chain-like seed-pods, rhomboidal or semiorbicular, or with concave backs. They love dry hillsides. They are not so abundant, after all, but I feel an agreeable surprise as often as I come across a new locality for desmodiums. Rarely find one kind without one or two more species near, their great spreading panicles, yet delicate, open, and airy, occupying the August air. Like raking masts

with countless guys slanted far over the neighboring plants.

Some of these desmodiums, the *paniculatum*, *Marilandicum*, *nudiflorum*, *rigidum*, and *Dillenii*, are so fine and inobvious that a careless observer would look through their thin flowery panicles without observing any flower at all. The flowery beds of *D. Marilandicum* reveal themselves to me like a blue-green mist or gauze veil spread on the grass. I find them abundant in some places where I am sure there were none last year. They are outsiders, few and far between, further removed from man's walks than most plants, considering that there is such a variety of them. A dry, thin family of many species, nowhere abundant, yet widely dispersed, looking out from dry hillsides and exercising their dry wit on the race of man. The lespedezas and *D. Canadense*, more stiff and wand-like, nearer to man and his paths. The *D. rigidum*, *Dillenii*, etc., etc., more spreading and open, thin and fleeting and dispersed like the aborigines. They occupy the same dry soil, too.

When huckleberries are getting stale on dry hillsides, amid the huckleberry bushes and in sprout-lands and by paths you may observe them. The broad meshes of their panicles rarely catch the eye. There is something witch-like about them; though so rare and remote, yet evidently, from those bur-like pods, expecting to come in contact with some travelling man or beast without their knowledge, to be transported to new hillsides; lying in wait, as it were, to catch by the hem of the berry-pickers' garments and so get a lift to new

quarters. They occupy a great deal of room, but are the less obvious for it. They put their chains about you, and they cling like savage children to their mother's back or breast. They escape your observation, as it were under bare poles. You only notice as far up as their green sails are set, perchance, or to the cross-trees, not the tall, tapering, raking spars, whence are looped the life-lines and halyards. Or it is like that slanting mast and rigging in navy-yards where masts are inserted.

Aug. 20. Rain all night and to-day, making it a little chilly. Though I sit with open window, I should think it uncomfortably cool with it closed. Some must have a little fire.

Aug. 21. Rains still all day, and wind rises, and shakes off much fruit and beats down the corn.

The prevailing solidagos now are, 1st, *stricta* (the upland [1] and also meadow one which I seem to have called *puberula*);[2] 2d, the three-ribbed, of apparently several varieties, which I have called *arguta* or *gigantea* (apparently truly the last); 3d, *altissima*, though commonly only a part of its panicles; 4th, *nemoralis*, just beginning generally to bloom. Then there is the *odora*, 5th, out some time, but not common; and, 6th, the *bicolor*, just begun in some places.

The commonest asters now are, 1st, the *Radula;* 2d, *dumosus;* 3d, *patens;* 4th, say *puniceus;* 5th, *cordifolius;* 6th, *macrophyllus;* (these two a good while);

[1] That is, *arguta* var. *juncea*.

[2] That is, true *stricta*.

7th, say *Tradescanti;* 8th, *miser;* 9th, *longifolius;* (these three quite rare yet); 10th, probably *acuminatus,* some time (not seen); 11th, *undulatus;* 12th, *lævis;* (these two scarcely to be seen yet).

N. B. Water so high I have not seen early meadow aster lately.

Aug. 22. Fair weather at last.

P. M. — Up Assabet.

Owing to the rain of the 8th and before, two days and two nights, the river rose to within six inches of the top of Hoar's wall. It had fallen about one half, when the rain began again on the night of the 20th, and again continued about two nights and two days, though so much did not fall as before; but, the river being high, it is now rising fast. The Assabet is apparently at its height, and rushing very swiftly past the Hemlocks, where it is narrow and choked with rocks, I can hardly row against it there. I see much hay floating, and two or three cocks, quite black, carried round and round in a great eddy by the side of the stream, which will ere long be released and continue their voyage down-stream. The water is backing up the main stream so that there is no current whatever in that, as far up as my boat's place, at least. When I rest on my oars the boat will not after any waiting drift down-stream. It is within three inches of the top of Hoar's wall at 7 P. M.

I notice three or four clumps of white maples, at the swamp up the Assabet, which have turned as red (dull red) as ever they do, fairly put on their autumnal

hue. But we have had no dry weather and no frost, and this is apparently a premature ripening of the leaves. The water stands around and affects them as it does the weeds and grass, — steams them too. They, as it were, take these for the fall rains, the latter rain, accept their fates, and put on the suitable dress. This shows how little frost has to do with such changes, except as a ripener of the leaves. The trees are so ready for this change that only a copious rain and rise of the waters as in the fall produces the same effect. Also some red maples on hillsides have a crisped look for the same reason, actually ripening and drying without turning and without drought or frost.

I find that much of the faint warbling I hear nowadays is from apparently *the young* Maryland yellowthroats, as it were practicing against another spring, — half-finished strains. They are also more inquisitive and bold than usual, hopping quite near.

The creak of the mole cricket is heard along the shore.

Aug. 23. P. M. — To Walden.

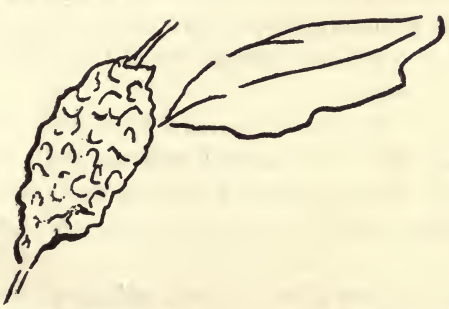
I see a bed of *Antennaria margaritacea*, now in its prime, by the railroad, and very handsome. It has fallen outward on all sides ray-wise, and rests on the ground, forming [a] perfectly regular circle, four feet in diameter and fifteen inches high, with a dark ash-colored centre, twenty inches in diameter, composed of the stems, then a wide circumference, one foot or more broad, of dense pearly masses of flowers covered

with bees and butterflies. This is as regular as a wheel. So fair and pure and abundant.

Elder-berries, now looking purple, are weighing down the bushes along fences by their abundance. White goldenrod, not long commonly. Decodon getting stale at Second Andromeda Pond. Often the end has rooted itself, and the whole forms a loop four feet long and twenty or more inches high in the middle, with numerous branches, making it rather troublesome to wade through. Where the stems bend down and rest on the water, they swell to several times their usual size and acquire that thick, soft bark, and put forth numerous roots; not the extreme point, but a space just short of it, while that starts up again.

On R. W. E.'s hillside by railroad, burnt over by the engine in the spring, the erechthites has shot up abundantly, very tall and straight, some six or seven feet high.

Those singular crowded and wrinkled dry galls, red and cream-color mingled, on white oak shrubs, with their grubs in them.



On the west side of Emerson's Cliff, I notice many *Gerardia pedicularia* out. A bee is hovering about

one bush. The flowers are not yet open, and if they were, perhaps he could not enter. He proceeds at once, head downwards, to the base of the tube, extracts the sweet there, and departs. Examining, I find that every flower has a small hole pierced through the tube, commonly through calyx and all, opposite the nectary. This does not hinder its opening. The Rape of the Flower! The bee knew where the sweet lay, and was unscrupulous in his mode of obtaining it. A certain violence tolerated by nature.

Now for high blackberries, though the low are gone. At the Lincoln bound hollow, Walden, there is a dense bed of the *Rubus hispidus*, matting the ground seven or eight inches deep, and full of the small black fruit, now in its prime. It is especially abundant where the vines lie over a stump. Has a peculiar, hardly agreeable acid.

On this *Lespedeza Stuvei*, a green locust an inch and three quarters long.

The scent of decaying fungi in woods is quite offensive now in many places, like carrion even. I see many red ones eaten more or less in the paths, nibbled out on the edges.

7 P. M. — The river has risen four inches since last night and now is one inch above the wall, and there is a little current there. Probably, then, the Assabet has begun to fall, — if this has not risen higher than that.

J. Farmer says that he found that the gummed twig of a chimney swallow's nest, though it burned when held in a flame, went out immediately when taken out

of it, and he thinks it owing to a peculiarity in the gum, rendering the twig partly fire-proof, so that they cannot be ignited by the sparks in a chimney. I suggested that these swallows had originally built in hollow trees, but it would be interesting to ascertain whether they constructed their nests in the same way and of the same material then.

Aug. 24. 3 P. M. — Up river to Clamshell.

Polygonum tenue abundant and in bloom, on side of Money-Diggers' Hill, especially at south base, near apple tree. The choke-cherry by fence beyond spring, being dead ripe and a little wilted, is at length tolerable eating, much better than I ever tasted, but the stones are much in the way.

I was surprised to hear Peter Flood mention it as an objection to a certain peat meadow that he would have to dry the peat on the adjacent upland. But he explained that peat dried thus was apt to crumble, and so was not so good as that dried gradually and all alike on damper ground; so an apparent disadvantage is a real advantage, according to this.

It rained a little last night, and the river at 3 P. M. is at the same height as last night. It is not remembered when it was so high at this season. I have not seen a white lily nor a yellow one in the river for a fortnight. The river meadows probably will not be mown this year. I can hardly get under the stone bridge without striking my boat. Cardinal-flowers, etc., etc., are drowned before they are fairly in bloom.

River at same height as yesterday.

Aug. 25. P. M. — To Hill by boat.

Silvery cinquefoil now begins to show itself commonly again. Perhaps it is owing to the rain, spring-like, which we have in August.

I paddle directly across the meadow, the river is so high, and land east of the elm on the third or fourth row of potatoes. The water makes more show on the meadows than yesterday, though hardly so high, because the grass is more flatted down. I easily make my way amid the thin spires. Almost every stem which rises above the surface has a grasshopper or caterpillar upon it. Some have seven or eight grasshoppers, clinging to their masts, one close and directly above another, like shipwrecked sailors, now the third or fourth day exposed. Whither shall they jump? It is a quarter of a mile to shore, and countless sharks lie in wait for them. They are so thick that they are like a crop which the grass bears; some stems are bent down by their weight. This flood affects other inhabitants of these fields than men; not only the owners of the grass, but its inhabitants much more. It drives them to their upper stories, — to take refuge in the rigging. Many that have taken an imprudent leap are seen struggling in the water. How much life is drowned out that inhabits about the roots of the meadow-grass! How many a family, perchance, of short-tailed meadow mice has had to scamper or swim!

The river-meadow cranberries are covered deep. I can count them as they lie in dense beds a foot under water, so distinct and white, or just beginning to have a red cheek. They will probably be spoiled, and this

crop will fail. Potatoes, too, in the low land on which water has stood so long, will rot.

The farmers commonly say that the spring floods, being of cold water, do not injure the grass like later ones when the water is warm, but I suspect it is not so much owing to the warmth of the water as to the age and condition of the grass and whatever else is exposed to them. They say that if you let the water rise and stand some time over the roots of trees in warm weather it will kill them. This, then, may be the value of these occasional freshets in August: they steam and kill the shrubs and trees which had crept into the river meadows, and so keep them open perpetually, which, perchance, the spring floods alone might not do. It is commonly supposed that our river meadows were much drier than now originally, or when the town was settled. They were probably drier before the dam was built at Billerica, but if they were much or at all drier than now originally, I ask what prevented their being converted into maple swamps? Maples, alders, birches, etc., are creeping into them quite fast on many sides at present. If they had been so dry as is supposed they would not have been open meadows. It seems to be true that high water in midsummer, when perchance the trees and shrubs are in a more tender state, kills them. It "steams" them, as it does the grass; and maybe the river thus asserts its rights, and possibly it would still to great extent, though the meadows should be considerably raised. Yet, I ask, why do maples, alders, etc., at present border the stream, though they do not spring up to any

extent in the open meadow? Is it because the immediate bank is commonly more firm as well as higher (their seeds also are more liable to be caught there), and where it is low they are protected by willows and button-bushes, which can bear the flood? Not even willows and button-bushes prevail in the Great Meadows, — though many of the former, at least, spring up there, — except on the most elevated parts or hummocks. The reason for this cannot be solely in the fact that the water stands over them there a part of the year, because they are still more exposed to the water in many places on the shore of the river where yet they thrive. Is it then owing to the soft character of the ground in the meadow and the ice tearing up the meadow so extensively? On the immediate bank of the river that kind of sod and soil is not commonly formed which the ice lifts up. Why is the black willow so strictly confined to the bank of the river? What is the use, in Nature's economy, of these occasional floods in August? Is it not partly to preserve the meadows open?

Mr. Rice says that the brook just beyond his brother Israel's in Sudbury rises and runs out before the river, and then you will see the river running up the brook as fast as the brook ran down before.

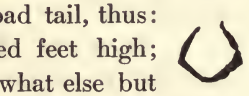
Apparently half the pads are now afloat, notwithstanding the depth of the water, but they are almost all white lily pads, the others being eaten and decayed. They have apparently lengthened their stems somewhat. They generally lie with more or less coil, prepared for a rise of the water, and perhaps the length

of that coil shows pretty accurately to how great a rise they are ordinarily subject at this season.

I was suggesting yesterday, as I have often before, that the town should provide a stone monument to be placed in the river, so as to be surrounded by water at its lowest stage, and a dozen feet high, so as to rise above it at its highest stage; on this feet and inches to be permanently marked; and it be made some one's duty to record each high or low stage of the water. Now, when we have a remarkable freshet, we cannot tell surely whether it is higher than the one thirty or sixty years ago or not. It would be not merely interesting, but often practically valuable, to know this. Reuben Rice was telling me to-night that the great freshet of two or three years ago came, according to his brother Israel, within two inches of one that occurred about forty years ago. I asked how he knew. He said that the former one took place early (February?), and the surface froze so that boys skated on it, and the ice marked a particular apple tree, girdled it, so that it is seen to this day. But we wish to speak more confidently than this allows. It is important when building a causeway, or a bridge, or a house even, in some situations, to know exactly how high the river has ever risen. It would need to be a very large stone or pile of stones, which the ice could not move or break. Perhaps one corner of a bridge abutment would do.

Rice killed a woodchuck to-day that was shearing off his beans. He was very fat.

I cross the meadows in the face of a thunder-storm

rising very dark in the north. There were several boats out, but their crews soon retreated homeward before the approaching storm. It came on rapidly, with vivid lightning striking the northern earth and heavy thunder following. Just before, and in the shadow of, the cloud, I saw, advancing majestically with wide circles over the meadowy flood, a fish hawk and, apparently, a black eagle (maybe a young white-head). The first, with slender curved wings and silvery breast, four or five hundred feet high, watching the water while he circled slowly southwesterly. What a vision that could detect a fish at that distance! The latter, with broad black wings and broad tail, thus:  hovered only about one hundred feet high; evidently a different species, and what else but an eagle? They soon disappeared southwest, cutting off a bend. The thunder-shower passed off to the southeast.

Aug. 26. *Tuesday.* More wind and quite cold this morning, but very bright and sparkling, autumn-like air, reminding of frosts to be apprehended,[1] also tempting abroad to adventure. The fall cricket — or is it alder locust? — sings the praises of the day.

So about 9 A. M. up river to Fair Haven Pond.

The flooded meadow, where the grasshoppers cling to the grass so thickly, is alive with swallows skimming just over the surface amid the grass-tops and *apparently* snapping up insects there. Are they catch-

[1] We see no effects of frost yet in garden, but hear a rumor of a little somewhere. First muskmelon gathered.

ing the grasshoppers as they cling to bare poles? (I see the swallows equally thick there at 5 P. M. when I return also.) River slowly falling. The most conspicuous weed rising above the water is the wool-grass, with its great, rich, seedy heads, which rise from a few inches to a foot above at present, as I push over the uncut meadows. I see many white lilies fairly and freshly in bloom after all this flood, though it looks like a resurrection. The wind is northwest, apparently by west, and I sail before it and under Hubbard's Bridge. The red maples of Potter's Swamp show a dull-purple blush and sometimes a low scarlet bough, the effect evidently of the rain ripening them.

Rice told me about their crossing the causeway from Wayland to Sudbury some sixty years ago in a freshet which he could just remember, in a half-hogshead tub, used for scalding pigs, having nailed some boards on the bottom to keep it from upsetting. It was too deep for a team.

We begin to apprehend frosts before the melons are ripe!

A blue heron sails away from a pine at Holden Swamp shore and alights on the meadow above. Again he flies, and alights on the hard Conantum side, where at length I detect him standing far away stake-like (his body concealed), eying me and depending on his stronger vision.

The desmodium flowers are pure purple, rose-purple in the morning when quite fresh, excepting the two green spots. The *D. rotundifolium* also has the two green (or in its case greenish) spots on its very large

flower. These desmodiums are so fine and inobvious that it is difficult to detect them. I go through a grove in vain, but when I get away, find my coat covered with their pods. They found me, though I did not them. The round-leafed desmodium has sometimes seven pods and large flowers still fresh.

The *Lespedeza Stuvei* is very abundant on Blackberry Steep, two and a half to three feet high. It has a looser top and less dense spikes than the *hirta*. It gives a pink hue to the hillside. The *L. violacea* is smaller and much more violet, the *hirta* more white. *Galium pilosum* still common; and *Desmodium acuminatum* still by rock on Blackberry Steep. This to be added to the desmodiums of this place.

As I stand there, a young male goldfinch darts away with a twitter from a spear thistle top close to my side, and, alighting near, makes frequent returns as near to me and the thistle as it dares pass, not yet knowing man well enough to fear him.

I rest and take my lunch on Lee's Cliff, looking toward Baker Farm. What is a New England landscape this sunny August day? A weather-painted house and barn, with an orchard by its side, in midst of a sandy field surrounded by green woods, with a small blue lake on one side. A sympathy between the color of the weather-painted house and that of the lake and sky. I speak not of a country road between its fences, for this house lies off one, nor do I commonly approach them from this side. The weather-painted house. This is the New England color, homely but fit as that of a toadstool. What matter though this one has not

Hubbard's Bridge and Water-lilies

flowers. These desmodiums are so fine and inobvious that it is difficult to detect them. I go through a grove in vain, but when I get away, find my coat covered with their pods. They found me, though I did not them. The round-leafed desmodium has sometimes seven pods and large flowers still fresh.

The *Lespedeza Stuvei* is very abundant on Blackberry Steep, two and a half to three feet high. It has a lesser top and less dense spikes than the *hirta*. It gives a pink tint to the hillside. The *L. violacea* is smaller and much more violet, the *hirta* more white. Unique pilosum still common; and *Desmodium acuminatum* still by rock on Blackberry Steep. This to be added to the desmodiums of this place.

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I rest and take my lunch on Lee's Cliff, looking toward Baker Farm. What is a New England landscape this warm August day? A weather-painted house and barn, with an orchard by its side, in midst of a sandy field surrounded by green woods, with a small blue lake on one side. A sympathy between the color of the weather-painted house and that of the lake and sky. I spend out of a country road between its fences, for this house lies off one, and do I commonly approach them from this side. The weather-painted house. This is the New England color, homely but fit as that of a mastodon. What matter though this one has not

been inhabited for thirty years? Methinks I hear the crow of a cock come up from its barn-yard.

I think I hear the pine warbler's note in the woods behind me. Hear a plain *phebe* note from a chickadee. Bluets still. Epilobium down flies abundantly on hillsides. I gather a bundle of pennyroyal; it grows largest and rankest high and close under these rocks, amid the loose stones. I tie my bundle with the purple bark of the poke-weed.

Sailed across to Bee Tree Hill. This hillside, laid bare two years ago and partly last winter, is almost covered with the *Aster macrophyllus*, now in its prime. It grows large and rank, two feet high. On one I count seventeen central flowers withered, one hundred and thirty in bloom, and half as many buds. As I looked down from the hilltop over the sprout-land, its rounded grayish tops amid the bushes I mistook for gray, lichen-clad rocks, such was its profusion and harmony with the scenery, like hoary rocky hilltops amid bushes. There were acres of it, densely planted. Also erechthites as abundant and rank in many places there as if it had been burnt over! So it does not necessarily imply fire. I thought I was looking down on gray, lichen-clad rocky summits on which a few bushes thinly grew. These rocks were asters, single ones a foot over, many prostrate, and making a gray impression. Many leaves of shrubs are crisp and withered and fallen there, though as yet no drought nor frost. Nothing but rain can have done it.

Aspen leaves are blackened. Stonecrop still. Another monster aphis on a huckleberry leaf. *Galium*

triflorum still. See a great many young oaks and shrub oaks stripped by caterpillars of different kinds now.

Last Friday (the 22d) afternoon (when I was away), Father's pig got out again and took to the riverside. The next day he was heard from, but not found. That night he was seen on an island in the meadow, in the midst of the flood, but thereafter for some time no account of him. J. Farmer advised to go to Ai Hale, just over the Carlisle line. He has got a dog which, if you put him on the track of the pig not more than four hours' old, will pursue and catch him and hold him by the ear without hurting him till you come up. That's the best way. Ten men cannot stop him in the road, but he will go by them. It was generally conceded that the right kind of dog was all that was wanted, like Ai Hale's, one that would hold him by the ear, but not uselessly maim him. One or two said if I only had such a one's dog, I'd catch him for so much.

Neighbors sympathized as much as in them lay. It was the town talk; the meetings were held at Wolcott & Holden's. Every man told of his losses and disappointments in this line. One had heard of his pig last up in Westford, but never saw him again; another had only caught his pig by his running against a post so hard as to stun himself for a few moments. It was thought this one must have been born in the woods, for he would run and leap like a wolf. Some advised not to build so very high, but lay the upper board flat over the pen, for then, when he caught by his fore feet, his body would swing under to no purpose. One said you would not catch him to buy

a pig out of a drove. Our pig ran as if he *still* had the devil in him. It was generally conceded that a good dog was the desideratum. But thereupon Lawrence, the harness-maker, came forward and told his experience. He once helped hunt a pig in the next town. He weighed two hundred; had been out some time (though not in '75), but they learned where he resorted; but they got a capital dog of the right kind. They had the dog tied lest he should scare the pig too soon. They crawled along very carefully near to the hollow where the pig was till they could hear him. They knew that if he should hear them and he was wide awake, he would dash off with a grunt, and that would be the last of him, but what more could they do? They consulted in a whisper and concluded to let the dog go. They did so, and directly heard an awful yelp; rushed up; the pig was gone, and there lay the dog torn all to pieces! At this there was a universal *haw! haw!* and the reputation of dogs fell, and the chance of catching the pig seemed less.

Two dollars reward was offered to him who would catch and return him without maiming him. At length, the 26th, he was heard from. He was caught and tied in north part of the town. Took to a swamp, as they say they are inclined. He was chased two hours with a spaniel dog, which never faced him, nor touched him, but, as the man said, "tuckered him out," kept him on the go and showed where he was. When at a distance the pig stopped and faced the dog until the pursuers came up. He was brought home the 27th, all his legs tied, and put into his new pen. It was a very deep one.

It might have been made deeper, but Father did not wish to build a wall, and the man who caught him and got his two dollars for it thought it ought to hold any decent pig. Father said he did n't wish to keep him in a well.

Aug. 27. P. M. — To Clintonia Swamp and Cardinal Ditch.

Unusually cold last night.

Goodyera pubescens, rattlesnake-plantain, is apparently a *little* past its prime. It is very abundant on Clintonia Swamp hillside, quite erect, with its white spike eight to ten inches high on the sloping hillside, the lower half or more turning brown, but the beautifully reticulated leaves which pave the moist shady hillside about its base are the chief attraction. These oval leaves, perfectly smooth like velvet to the touch, about one inch long, have a broad white midrib and four to six longitudinal white veins, very prettily and thickly connected by other conspicuous white veins transversely and irregularly, all on a dark rich green ground. Is it not the prettiest leaf that paves the forest floor? As a cultivated exotic it would attract great attention for its leaf. Many of the leaves are eaten. Is it by partridges? It is a leaf of firm texture, not apt to be partially eaten by insects or decayed, and does not soon wilt. So unsoiled and undecayed. It might be imitated on carpets and rugs. Some old withered stems of last year still stand.

On dry, open hillsides and fields the *Spiranthes gracilis* is very common of late, rising tall and slender,

with its spiral of white flowers like a screw-thread at top; sometimes fifteen inches high.

There are, close by the former, the peculiar large dark blue indigo clintonia berries of irregular form and dark-spotted, in umbels of four or five on very brittle stems which break with a snap and on erectish stemlets or pedicels.

See no fringed gentian yet. *Veronica serpyllifolia* again by Brister's Spring. Krigia yesterday at Lee's Cliff, apparently again, though it may be uninterruptedly. Tobacco-pipe still. The rhexia greets me in bright patches on meadow banks. *Ludwigia alternifolia* still. It is abundant in Cardinal Ditch, twenty rods from road. *Bidens frondosa*, how long? *Hypericum Canadense* and *mutilum* now pretty generally open at 4 P. M., thus late in the season, it being more moist and cooler.

The cardinals in this ditch make a splendid show now, though they would have been much fresher and finer a week ago. They nearly fill the ditch for thirty-five rods perfectly straight, about three feet high. I count at random ten in one square foot, and as they are two feet wide by thirty-five rods, there are four or five thousand at least, and maybe more. They look like slender plumes of soldiers advancing in a dense troop, and a few white (or rather pale-pink) ones are mingled with the scarlet. That is the most splendid show of cardinal-flowers I ever saw. They are mostly gone to seed, *i. e.* the greater part of the spike.

Mimulus there still common.

Near the clintonia berries, I found the *Polygonatum*

pubescens berries on its handsome leafy stem recurved over the hillside, generally two slaty-blue (but dark-green beneath the bloom) berries on an axillary peduncle three quarters of an inch long, hanging straight down; eight or nine such peduncles, dividing to two short pedicels at end; the berries successively smaller from below upwards, from three eighths of an inch [in] diameter to hardly more than one eighth.

There are many wild-looking berries about now. The *Viburnum Lentago* begin to show their handsome red cheeks, rather elliptic-shaped and mucronated, one cheek clear red with a purplish bloom, the other pale green, *now*. Among the handsomest of berries, one half inch long by three eighths by two eighths, being somewhat flattish. Then there are the *Viburnum dentatum* berries, in flattish cymes, dull lead-colored berries, depressed globular, three sixteenths of an inch in diameter, with a mucronation, hard, seedy, dryish, and unpalatable.

The large depressed globular hips of the moss rose begin to turn scarlet in low ground.

Aug. 28. First watermelon.

P. M. — To tortoise eggs, Marlborough road.

Potentilla Norvegica again. I go over linnæa sprout-lands. The panicled cornel berries are whitening, but already mostly fallen. As usual the leaves of this shrub, though it is so wet, are rolled like corn, showing the paler under sides. At this season it would seem that rain, frost, and drought all produce similar effects. Now the black cherries in sprout-lands are in their

prime, and the black choke-berries just after huckleberries and blueberries. They are both very abundant this year. The branches droop with cherries. Those on some trees are very superior to others. The bushes are weighed down with choke-berries, which no creature appears to gather. This crop is as abundant as the huckleberries have been. They have a sweet and pleasant taste enough, but leave a mass of dry pulp in the mouth. But it is worth the while to see their profusion, if only to know what nature can do. Huckleberries are about given up, low blueberries more or less shrivelled, low blackberries done, high blackberries still to be had. *Viburnum nudum* berries are beginning; I already see a few shrivelled purple ones amid the light green. Poke berries also begun.

A goldfinch twitters away from every thistle now, and soon returns to it when I am past. I see the ground strewn with the thistle-down they have scattered on every side.

At Tarbell's andromeda swamp. A probable *Bidens connata* or small *chrysanthemoides*.

I open the painted tortoise nest of June 10th, and find a young turtle partly out of his shell. He is roundish and the sternum clear uniform pink. The marks on the sides are pink. The upper shell is fifteen sixteenths of an inch plus by thirteen sixteenths. He is already wonderfully strong and precocious. Though those eyes never saw the light before, he watches me very warily, even at a distance. With what vigor he crawls out of the hole I have made, over opposing weeds! He struggles in my fingers with great strength;

has none of the tenderness of infancy. His whole snout is convex, and curved like a beak. Having attained the surface, he pauses and warily watches me. In the meanwhile another has put his head out of his shell, but I bury the latter up and leave them.

Meanwhile a striped squirrel sits on the wall across the road under a pine, eying me, with his cheek-pouches stuffed with nuts and puffed out ludicrously, as if he had the mumps, while the wall is strewn with the dry brown husks of hazelnuts he has stripped. A bird, perhaps a thrasher, in the pine close above him is hopping restlessly and scolding at him.

June, July, and August, the tortoise eggs are hatching a few inches beneath the surface in sandy fields. You tell of active labors, of works of art, and wars the past summer; meanwhile the tortoise eggs underlie this turmoil. What events have transpired on the lit and airy surface three inches above them! Sumner knocked down; Kansas living an age of suspense. Think what is a summer to them! How many worthy men have died and had their funeral sermons preached since I saw the mother turtle bury her eggs here! They contained an undeveloped liquid then, they are now turtles. June, July, and August, — the livelong summer, — what are they with their heats and fevers but sufficient to hatch a tortoise in. Be not in haste; mind your private affairs. Consider the turtle. A whole summer — June, July, and August — is not too good nor too much to hatch a turtle in. Perchance you have worried yourself, despaired of the world, meditated the end of life, and all things seemed rushing to de-

struction; but nature has steadily and serenely advanced with a turtle's pace. The young turtle spends its infancy within its shell. It gets experience and learns the ways of the world through that wall. While it rests warily on the edge of its hole, rash schemes are undertaken by men and fail. Has not the tortoise also learned the true value of time? You go to India and back, and the turtle eggs in your field are still unhatched. French empires rise or fall, but the turtle is developed only so fast. What's a summer? Time for a turtle's eggs to hatch. So is the turtle developed, fitted to endure, for he outlives twenty French dynasties. One turtle knows several Napoleons. They have seen no berries, had no cares, yet has not the great world existed for them as much as for you?

Euphorbia hypericifolia, how long? It has pretty little white and also rose-colored petals, or, as they are now called, involucre. Stands six inches high, regularly curving, with large leaves prettily arranged at an angle with both a horizontal and perpendicular line. See the great oval masses of scarlet berries of the arum now in the meadows. Trillium fruit, long time.

The river being thus high, for ten days or more I have seen little parcels of shells left by the muskrats. So they eat them thus early. Peppermint, how long? May be earlier than I have thought, for the mowers clip it.

The bright china-colored blue berries of the *Cornus sericea* begin to show themselves along the river, amid their red-brown leaves, — the *kinnikinnic* of the Indians.

Aug. 29. Heavy rain in the night and this forenoon.

P. M. — To J. Farmer's by river.

The *Helianthus decapetalus*, apparently a variety, with eight petals, about three feet high, leaves petioled, but not wing-petioled, and broader-leaved than that of August 12th, quite ovate with a tapering point, with ciliate petioles, thin but quite rough beneath and above, stem purple and smoothish, Hosmer's bank, opposite Azalea Swamp. Fragrant everlasting in prime and very abundant, whitening Carter's pasture. Ribwort still. An apparent white vervain with bluish flowers, as blue as bluets even or more so, roadside beyond Farmer's barn.

Aug. 30. Rain again in the night, as well as most of yesterday, raising the river a second time. They say there has not been such a year as this for more than half a century, — for winter cold, summer heat, and rain.

P. M. — To Vaccinium Oxycoccus Swamp.

Fair weather, clear and rather cool.

Pratt shows me at his shop a bottle filled with alcohol and camphor. The alcohol is clear and the camphor beautifully crystallized at the bottom for nearly an inch in depth, in the form of small feathers, like a hoar frost. He has read that this is as good a barometer as any. It stands quite still, and has not been unstoppled for a year; yet some days the alcohol will be quite clear, and even no camphor will be seen, and again it will be quite full of fine feathery particles, or it will be partly clear, as to-day.

Bidens connata abundant at Moore's Swamp, how long? The aspect of some of what I have called the swamp *Solidago stricta* there at present makes me doubt if it be not more than a variety, the leaves are so broad, smooth (*i. e.* uncurled or wrinkled), and thick, and some cauline ones so large, almost *speciosa*-like, to say nothing of size of rays.

The *Aster puniceus* is hardly yet in prime; its great umbel-shaped tops not yet fully out. Its leaves are pretty generally whitened with mildew and unsightly. Even the chelone, where prostrate, has put forth roots from its stem, near the top.

The sarothra is now apparently in prime on the Great Fields, and comes near being open now, at 3 P. M. Bruised, it has the fragrance of sorrel and lemon, rather pungent or stinging, like a bee. *Hypericum corymbosum* lingers still, with *perforatum*.

I have come out this afternoon a-cranberrying, chiefly to gather some of the small cranberry, *Vaccinium Oxycoccus*, which Emerson says is the common cranberry of the north of Europe. This was a small object, yet not to be postponed, on account of imminent frosts, *i. e.*, if I would know this year the flavor of the European cranberry as compared with our larger kind. I thought I should like to have a dish of this sauce on the table at Thanksgiving of my own gathering. I could hardly make up my mind to come this way, it seemed so poor an object to spend the afternoon on. I kept foreseeing a lame conclusion, — how I should cross the Great Fields, look into Beck Stow's, and then retrace my steps no richer than

before. In fact, I expected little of this walk, yet it did pass through the side of my mind that somehow, on this very account (my small expectation), it would turn out well, as also the advantage of having some purpose, however small, to be accomplished, — of letting your deliberate wisdom and foresight in the house to some extent direct and control your steps. If you would really take a position outside the street and daily life of men, you must have deliberately planned your course, you must have business which is not your neighbors' business, which they cannot understand. For only absorbing employment prevails, succeeds, takes up space, occupies territory, determines the future of individuals and states, drives Kansas out of your head, and actually and permanently occupies the only desirable and free Kansas against all border ruffians. The attitude of resistance is one of weakness, inasmuch as it only faces an enemy; it has its back to all that is truly attractive. You shall have your affairs, I will have mine. You will spend this afternoon in setting up your neighbor's stove, and be paid for it; I will spend it in gathering the few berries of the *Vaccinium Oxycoccus* which Nature produces here, before it is too late, and *be paid for it also* after another fashion. I have always reaped unexpected and incalculable advantages from carrying out at last, however tardily, any little enterprise which my genius suggested to me long ago as a thing to be done, — some step to be taken, however slight, out of the usual course.

How many schools I have thought of which I might

go to but did not go to! expecting foolishly that some greater advantage or schooling would come to me! It is these comparatively cheap and private expeditions that substantiate our existence and batten our lives, as, where a vine touches the earth in its undulating course, it puts forth roots and thickens its stock. Our employment generally is tinkering, mending the old worn-out teapot of society. Our stock in trade is solder. Better for me, says my genius, to go cranberrying this afternoon for the *Vaccinium Oxycoccus* in Gowing's Swamp, to get but a pocketful and learn its peculiar flavor, aye, and the flavor of Gowing's Swamp and of *life* in New England, than to go consul to Liverpool and get I don't know how many thousand dollars for it, with no such flavor. Many of our days should be spent, not in vain expectations and lying on our oars, but in carrying out deliberately and faithfully the hundred little purposes which every man's genius must have suggested to him. Let not your life be wholly without an object, though it be only to ascertain the flavor of a cranberry, for it will not be only the quality of an insignificant berry that you will have tasted, but the flavor of your life to that extent, and it will be such a sauce as no wealth can buy.

Both a conscious and an unconscious life are good. Neither is good exclusively, for both have the same source. The wisely conscious life springs out of an unconscious suggestion. I have found my account in travelling in having prepared beforehand a list of questions which I would get answered, not trusting

to my interest at the moment, and can then travel with the most profit. Indeed, it is by obeying the suggestions of a higher light within you that you escape from yourself and, in the transit, as it were see with the unworn sides of your eye, travel totally new paths. What is that pretended life that does not take up a claim, that does not occupy ground, that cannot build a causeway to its objects, that sits on a bank looking over a bog, singing its desires?

However, it was not with such blasting expectations as these that I entered the swamp. I saw bags of cranberries, just gathered and tied up, on the banks of Beck Stow's Swamp. They must have been raked out of the water, now so high, before they should rot. I left my shoes and stockings on the bank far off and waded barelegged through rigid andromeda and other bushes a long way, to the soft open sphagnous centre of the swamp.

I found these cunning little cranberries lying high and dry on the firm uneven tops of the sphagnum, — their weak vine considerably on one side, — sparsely scattered about the drier edges of the swamp, or sometimes more thickly occupying some little valley a foot or two over, between two mountains of sphagnum. They were of two varieties, judging from the fruit. The one, apparently the ripest, colored most like the common cranberry but more scarlet, *i. e.* yellowish-green, blotched or checked with dark scarlet-red, commonly pear-shaped; the other, also pear-shaped, or more bulged out in the middle, thickly and finely dark-spotted or peppered on yellowish-green or straw-

colored or pearly ground, — almost exactly like the smilacina and convallaria berries now, except that they are a little larger and not so spherical, — and with a tinge of purple. A singular difference. They both lay very snug in the moss, often the whole of the long (an inch and a half or more) peduncle buried, their vines very inobvious, projecting only one to three inches, so that it was not easy to tell what vine they belonged to, and you were obliged to open the moss carefully with your fingers to ascertain it; while the common large cranberry there, with its stiff erect vine, was commonly lifted above the sphagnum. The grayish speckled variety was particularly novel and pretty, though not easy to detect. It lay here and there snugly sunk in the sphagnum, whose drier parts it exactly resembled in color, just like some kind of swamp sparrows' eggs in their nest. I was obliged with my finger carefully to trace the slender pedicel through the moss to its vine, when I would pluck the whole together. Like jewels worn on, or set in, these sphagnous breasts of the swamp, — swamp pearls, call them. One or two to a vine and, on an average, three eighths of an inch in diameter. They are so remote from their vines, on their long thread-like peduncles, that they remind you the more forcibly of eggs, and in May I might mistake them for such. These plants are almost parasitic, resting wholly on the sphagnum, in water instead of air. The sphagnum is a living soil for it. It rests on and amid this, on an acre of sponges. They are evidently earlier than the common. A few are quite soft and red-purple.

I waded quite round the swamp for an hour, my bare feet in the cold water beneath, and it was a relief to place them on the warmer surface of the sphagnum. I filled one pocket with each variety, but sometimes, being confused, crossed hands and put them into the wrong pocket.

I enjoyed this cranberrying very much, notwithstanding the wet and cold, and the swamp seemed to be yielding its crop to me alone, for there are none else to pluck it or to value it. I told the proprietor once that they grew here, but he, learning that they were not abundant enough to be gathered for the market, has probably never thought of them since. I am the only person in the township who regards them or knows of them, and I do not regard them in the light of their pecuniary value. I have no doubt I felt richer wading there with my two pockets full, treading on wonders at every step, than any farmer going to market with a hundred bushels which he has raked, or hired to be raked. I got further and further away from the town every moment, and my good genius seemed [to] have smiled on me, leading me hither, and then the sun suddenly came out clear and bright, but it did not warm my feet. I would gladly share my gains, take one, or twenty, into partnership and get this swamp with them, but I do not know an individual whom this berry cheers and nourishes as it does me. When I exhibit it to them I perceive that they take but a momentary interest in it and commonly dismiss it from their thoughts with the consideration that it cannot be profitably cultivated. You could not get a pint at one haul of a rake, and Slocum would not give

you much for them. But I love it the better partly for that reason even. I fill a basket with them and keep it several days by my side. If anybody else — any farmer, at least — should spend an hour thus wading about here in this secluded swamp, barelegged, intent on the sphagnum, filling his pocket only, with no rake in his hand and no bag or bushel on the bank, he would be pronounced insane and have a guardian put over him; but if he 'll spend his time skimming and watering his milk and selling his small potatoes for large ones, or generally in skinning flints, he will probably be made guardian of somebody else. I have not garnered any rye or oats, but I gathered the wild vine of the Assabet.[1]

As I waded there I came across an ant-like heap, and, breaking it open with my hand, found it to my surprise to be an ant-hill in the sphagnum, full of ants with their young or ova. It consisted of particles of sphagnum like sawdust, was a foot and a half in diameter, and my feet sunk to water all around it! The ants were small and of a uniform pale sorrel-color.

I noticed also a few small peculiar-looking huckleberries hanging on bushes amid the sphagnum, and, tasting, perceived that they were hispid, a new kind to me. *Gaylussacia dumosa* var. *hirtella* (perhaps just after *resinosa*), though Gray refers it to a "*sandy* low soil" and says nothing of the hispid fruit. It grows from one to two feet high, the leaves minutely resinous-dotted — are not others? — and mucronate, the racemes long, with leaf-like bracts now turned conspicu-

[1] *Vide* [3] pages forward.

ously red. Has a small black hairy or hispid berry, shining but insipid and inedible, with a tough, hairy skin left in the mouth; has very prominent calyx-lobes.

I seemed to have reached a new world, so wild a place that the very huckleberries grew hairy and were inedible. I feel as if I were in Rupert's Land, and a slight cool but agreeable shudder comes over me, as if equally far away from human society. What's the need of visiting far-off mountains and bogs, if a half-hour's walk will carry me into such wildness and novelty? But why should not as wild plants grow here as in Berkshire, as in Labrador? Is Nature so easily tamed? Is she not as primitive and vigorous here as anywhere? How does this particular acre of secluded, unfrequented, useless (?) quaking bog differ from an acre in Labrador? Has any white man ever settled on it? Does any now frequent it? Not even the Indian comes here now. I see that there are some square rods within twenty miles of Boston just as wild and primitive and unfrequented as a square rod in Labrador, as unaltered by man. Here grows the hairy huckleberry as it did in Squaw Sachem's day and a thousand years before, and concerns me perchance more than it did her. I have no doubt that for a moment I experience exactly the same sensations as if I were alone in a bog in Rupert's Land, and it saves me the trouble of going there; for what in any case makes the difference between being here and being there but many such little differences of flavor and roughness put together? Rupert's Land is recognized as much by one sense as another. I felt a shock, a thrill, an agree-

able surprise in one instant, for, no doubt, all the possible inferences were at once drawn, with a rush, in my mind, — I could be in Rupert's Land and supping at home within the hour! This beat the railroad. I recovered from my surprise without danger to my sanity, and permanently annexed Rupert's Land. That wild hairy huckleberry, inedible as it was, was equal to a domain secured to me and reaching to the South Sea. That was an unexpected harvest. I hope you have gathered as much, neighbor, from your corn and potato fields. I have got in my huckleberries. I shall be ready for Thanksgiving. It is in vain to dream of a wildness distant from ourselves. There is none such. It is the bog in our brain and bowels, the primitive vigor of Nature in us, that inspires that dream. I shall never find in the wilds of Labrador any greater wildness than in some recess in Concord, *i. e.* than I import into it. A little more manhood or virtue will make the surface of the globe anywhere thrillingly novel and wild. That alone will provide and pay the fiddler; it will convert the district road into an untrodden cranberry bog, for it restores all things to their original primitive flourishing and promising state.

A cold white horizon sky in the north, forerunner of the fall of the year. I go to bed and dream of cranberry-pickers far in the cold north. With windows partly closed, with continent concentrated thoughts, I dream. I get my new experiences still, not at the opera listening to the Swedish Nightingale, but at Beck Stow's Swamp listening to the native wood thrush.

Wading in the cold swamp braces me. I was invigorated, though I tasted not a berry. The frost will soon come and smite them on the surface of the sphagnum.

Consider how remote and novel that swamp. Beneath it is a quaking bed of sphagnum, and in it grow *Andromeda Polifolia*, *Kalmia glauca*, menyanthes (or buck-bean), *Gaylussacia dumosa*, *Vaccinium Oxycoccus*, — plants which scarcely a citizen of Concord ever sees. It would be as novel to them to stand there as in a conservatory, or in Greenland.

Better it is to go a-cranberrying than to go a-huckleberrying. For that is cold and bracing, leading your thoughts beyond the earth, and you do not surfeit on crude or terrene berries. It feeds your spirit, now in the season of white twilights, when frosts are apprehended, when edible berries are mostly gone.

Those small gray sparrow-egg cranberries lay so prettily in the recesses of the sphagnum, I could wade for hours in the cold water gazing at them, with a swarm of mosquitoes hovering about my bare legs, — but at each step the friendly sphagnum in which I sank protected my legs like a buckler, — not a crevice by which my foes could enter.

I see that all is not garden and cultivated field and crops, that there are square rods in Middlesex County as purely primitive and wild as they were a thousand years ago, which have escaped the plow and the axe and the scythe and the cranberry-rake, little oases of wildness in the desert of our civilization, wild as a square rod on the moon, supposing it to be uninhabited. I believe almost in the personality of such

planetary matter, feel something akin to reverence for it, can even worship it as terrene, titanic matter extant in my day. We are so different we admire each other, we healthily attract one another. I love it as a maiden. These spots are meteoric, aerolitic, and such matter has in all ages been worshipped. Aye, when we are lifted out of the slime and film of our habitual life, we see the whole globe to be an aerolite, and reverence it as such, and make pilgrimages to it, far off as it is. How happens it that we reverence the stones which fall from another planet, and not the stones which belong to this, — another globe, not this, — heaven, and not earth? Are not the stones in Hodge's wall as good as the aerolite at Mecca? Is not our broad back-door-stone as good as any corner-stone in heaven?

It would imply the regeneration of mankind, if they were to become elevated enough to truly worship stocks and stones. It is the sentiment of fear and slavery and habit which makes a heathenish idolatry. Such idolaters abound in all countries, and heathen cross the seas to reform heathen, dead to bury the dead, and all go down to the pit together. If I could, I would worship the parings of my nails. If he who makes two blades of grass grow where one grew before is a benefactor, he who discovers two gods where there was only known the one (and such a one!) before is a still greater benefactor. I would fain improve every opportunity to wonder and worship, as a sunflower welcomes the light.[1] The more thrilling, wonderful, divine

[1] [Channing, p. 89.]

objects I behold in a day, the more expanded and immortal I become. If a stone appeals to me and elevates me, tells me how many miles I have come, how many remain to travel, — and the more, the better, — reveals the future to me in some measure, it is a matter of private rejoicing. If it did the same service to all, it might well be a matter of public rejoicing.

Aug. 31. *Sunday.* P. M. — To Hubbard Bath Swamp by boat.

There sits one by the shore who wishes to go with me, but I cannot think of it. I must be fancy-free. There is no such mote in the sky as a man who is not perfectly transparent to you, — who has any opacity. I would rather attend to him earnestly for half an hour, on shore or elsewhere, and then dismiss him. He thinks I could merely take him into my boat and then not mind him. He does not realize that I should by the same act take him into my mind, where there is no room for him, and my bark would surely founder in such a voyage as I was contemplating. I know very well that I should never reach that expansion of the river I have in my mind, with him aboard with his broad terrene qualities. He would sink my bark (not to another sea) and never know it. I could better carry a heaped load of meadow mud and sit on the tholepins. There would be more room for me, and I should reach that expansion of the river nevertheless.

I could better afford to take him into bed with me, for then I might, perhaps, abandon him in my dreams.

Ah! you are a heavy fellow, but I am well disposed. If you could go without going, then you might go. There's the captain's stateroom, empty to be sure, and you say you could go in the steerage. I know very well that only your baggage would be dropped in the steerage, while you would settle right down into that other snug recess. Why, I am *going*, not staying. I have come on purpose to sail, to paddle away from such as you, and you have waylaid me at the shore. You have chosen to make your assault at the moment of embarkation. Why, if I thought you were steadily gazing after me a mile off, I could not endure it. It is because I trust that I shall ere long depart from your thoughts, and so you from mine, that I am encouraged to set sail at all. I make haste to put several meanders and some hills between us. This Company is obliged to make a distinction between dead freight and passengers. I will take almost any amount of freight for you cheerfully,—anything, my dear sir, but yourself.

Some are so inconsiderate as to ask to walk or sail with me regularly every day — I have known such — and think that, because there will be six inches or a foot between our bodies, we shall not interfere! These things are settled by fate. The good ship sails — when she is ready. For freight or passage apply to —?? Ask my friend where. What is getting into a man's carriage when it is full, compared with putting your foot in his mouth and popping right into his mind without considering whether it is occupied or not? If I remember aright, it was only on condition *that you were*

asked, that you were to go with a man one mile or twain.[1] Suppose a man asks, not you to go with him, but to go with you! Often, I would rather undertake to shoulder a barrel of pork and carry it a mile than take into my company a man. It would not be so heavy a weight upon my mind. I could put it down and only feel my *back* ache for it.

The birches on Wheeler's meadow have begun to yellow, apparently owing to the water. The *Cornus sericea*, with its berries just turning, is generally a dull purple now, the first conspicuous change, methinks, along the river; half sunk in water.

Captain Hubbard is out inspecting his river meadow and his cranberries. Says he never saw the water so high at this season before. I am surprised that the river is not more than two inches higher than yesterday, or than the day before, notwithstanding the last copious rain; but Hubbard says he has heard that they have just lowered their dam a foot at Billerica. He sees that the water has fallen a little in his meadow. It leaves a scum on the grass and gives it a smell and taste, which makes the cattle reject it. He gets into my boat, and we obtain some cranberries from beneath the water. Some of them are softened and spoiled. H. thinks it depends on the warmth of the water how much they are injured. This is what calls the farmer out now, — to inspect his cranberries or his grass. He talks with his neighbor about it at church.

I am frequently amused when I come across the proprietor in my walks, and he asks me if I am not

[1] [Channing, pp. 119, 120.]

lost. I commonly approach his territory by the river, or some other back way, and rarely meet with him. The other day Conant observed to me, "Well, you have to come out once in a while to take a survey." He thinks that I do not visit his neighborhood more than once in a year, but I go there about once a week, and formerly much oftener; perhaps as often as he.

H. says he has found coal at the bottom of his meadow under the mud, three feet deep.

The *Viburnum nudum* berries are now in prime, a handsome rose-purple. I brought home a bunch of fifty-three berries, all of this color, and the next morning thirty were turned dark purple. In this state they are soft and just edible, having somewhat of a cherry flavor, not a large stone.

A painted tortoise shedding its scales.

II

SEPTEMBER, 1856

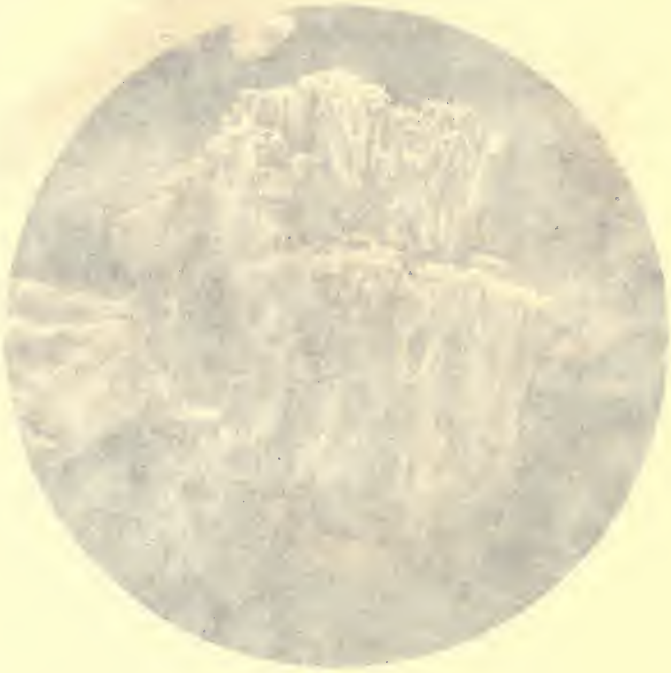
(ÆT. 39)

Sept. 1. P. M. — With R. W. E. to Saw Mill and *Solidago odora.*

He has just had four of his fir trees next his house cut, they shaded his windows so. They were set out by Coolidge, E. thinks twenty-eight years ago. The largest has thirty-seven annual rings at the base and measures at one foot from the ground forty-six and a half inches in circumference; has made, on an average, about half an inch of wood in every direction.

There is no *Bidens cernua,* if that is it, by the Turnpike. It was apparently killed by the recent high water. *Solidago latifolia* not out quite.

We go admiring the pure and delicate tints of fungi on the surface of the damp swamp there, following up along the north side of the brook past the right of the old camp. There are many very beautiful lemon-yellow ones of various forms, some shaped like buttons, some becoming finely scalloped on the edge, some club-shaped and hollow, of the most delicate and rare but decided tints, contrasting well with the decaying leaves about them. There are others also pure white, others a wholesome red, others brown, and some even a light indigo-blue above and beneath and throughout. When colors come to be taught in the schools, as they should



Coral Fungus

II

SEPTEMBER, 1856

(ÆT. 40)

be, both the prism (or the rainbow) and these fungi should be used by way of illustration, and if the pupil does not learn colors, he may learn fungi, which perhaps is better. You almost envy the wood frogs and toads that hop amid such gems, — some pure and bright enough for a breastpin. Out of every crevice between the dead leaves oozes some vehicle of color, the unspent wealth of the year, which Nature is now casting forth, as if it were only to empty herself.

Cohush berries appear now to be in their prime, and arum berries, and red choke-berries, which last further up in this swamp, with their peculiar glossy red and squarish form, are really very handsome. A few medeola berries ripe. The very dense clusters of the smilacina berries, finely purple-dotted on a pearly ground, are very interesting; also the smaller and similar clusters of the two-leaved convallaria. Many of the last and a few of the first are already turned red, clear semilucent red. They have a pleasant sweetish taste.

Cistus flowers well out again in the old camp path, now nearly all grown up. I notice that the birches have sprung up in close, straight rows in the old ruts there.

I think it stands about thus with asters and golden-rods now: —

The early meadow aster is either quite withered or much the worse for the wear, partly on account of the freshet.

Diplopappus cornifolius, not seen of late.

D. umbellatus, perhaps in prime or approaching it, but not much seen.

A. patens, apparently now in prime and the most abundant of the larger asters.

A. macrophyllus, probably past prime.
A. acuminatus, not seen at all.
A. Radula, rather past prime.
A. dumosus, very common, most so of the small white, and in prime.
D. linariifolius, hardly noticed.
A. undulatus, hardly one seen yet open, a late aster.
A. corymbosus, in prime, or maybe past.
A. lævis, just beginning.[1]
A. Tradescanti, got to be pretty common, but not yet in prime.
A. puniceus, hardly yet in prime.[2]
A. longifolius, hardly one seen yet.
A. multiflorus, not one seen yet.[3]
Solidago stricta, still very abundant, though probably a little past prime.
S. gigantea, say in prime.
S. nemoralis, not quite in prime, but very abundant.
S. altissima, perhaps in prime.
S. odora, in prime, or maybe a little past.
S. puberula, just beginning, rare in any case.
S. bicolor, not quite in prime, but common.
S. lanceolata, in prime, or past.[4]
S. latifolia, not yet at all.
S. cæsia, just begun.
S. speciosa, not at all yet.

Sept. 2. P. M. — To Painted-Cup Meadow.

Clear bright days of late, with a peculiar sheen on the leaves, — light reflected from the surface of each one, for they are grown and worn and washed smooth at last, no infantile downiness on them. This, say ever since August 26th, and we have had no true dog-day

[1] Can this be the same open July 13th? [2] *Vide* Sept. 5.
[3] (Oct. 8th) *A. miser* (omitted). If I mistake not it began to be common about Sept. 1st.
[4] *Vide* Sept. 5.

weather since the copious rains began, or three or four weeks. A sheeny light reflected from the burnished leaves as so many polished shields, and a steady creak from the locusts these days. Frank Harding has caught a dog-day locust which lit on the bottom of my boat, in which he was sitting, and *z*-ed there. When you hear him you have got to the end of the alphabet and may imagine the &. It has a mark somewhat like a small writing *w* on the top of its thorax.

A few pigeons were seen a fortnight ago. I have noticed none in all walks, but G. Minott, whose mind runs on them so much, but whose age and infirmities confine him to his wood-shed on the hillside, saw a small flock a fortnight ago. I rarely pass at any season of the year but he asks if I have seen any pigeons. One man's mind running on pigeons, [he] will sit thus in the midst of a village, many of whose inhabitants never see nor dream of a pigeon except in the pot, and where even naturalists do not observe [them], and he, looking out with expectation and faith from morning till night, will surely see them.

I think we may detect that some sort of preparation and faint expectation preceded every discovery we have made. We blunder into no discovery but it will appear that we have prayed and disciplined ourselves for it. Some years ago I sought for Indian hemp (*Apocynum cannabinum*) hereabouts in vain, and concluded that it did not grow here. A month or two ago I read again, as many times before, that its blossoms were very small, scarcely a third as large

as those of the common species, and for some unaccountable reason this distinction kept recurring to me, and I regarded the size of the flowers I saw, though I did not believe that it grew here; and in a day or two my eyes fell on [it], aye, in three different places, and different varieties of it. Also, a short time ago, I was satisfied that there was but one kind of sunflower (*divaricatus*) indigenous here. Hearing that one had found another kind, it occurred to me that I had seen a taller one than usual lately, but not so distinctly did I remember this as to name it to him or even fully remember it myself. (I rather remembered it afterward.) But within that hour my genius conducted me to where I had seen the tall plants, and it was the other man's new kind. The next day I found a third kind, miles from there, and, a few days after, a fourth in another direction.

It commonly chances that I make my most interesting botanical discoveries when I [am] in a thrilled and expectant mood, perhaps wading in some remote swamp where I have just found something novel and feel more than usually remote from the town. Or some rare plant which for some reason has occupied a strangely prominent place in my thoughts for some time will present itself. My expectation ripens to discovery. I am prepared for strange things.

My father asked John Legross if he took an interest in politics and did his duty to his country at this crisis. He said he did. He went into the wood-shed and read the newspaper Sundays. Such is the dawn of the literary taste, the first seed of literature that is planted

in the new country. His grandson may be the author of a Bhagvat-Geeta.

I see bright-yellow blossoms on perfectly crimson *Hypericum angulosum* in the *S. lanceolata* path. By the Indian hemp at the stone bridge, am surprised to see the *Salix lucida*, a small tree with very marked and handsome leaves, on the sand, water's edge, at the great eddy. The branches of an inch in diameter are smooth and ash-colored, maple-like; the recent shoots stout and yellowish-green, very brittle at base. The leaves are the largest of any willow I have seen, ovate-oblong or ovate-lanceolate, with a long, narrow, tapering point (cuspidate), some on vigorous shoots, two and a half by seven inches wide in the blade, glandular-serrate, with pedicellate glands at the rounded base, thick, smooth, and glossy above, smooth and green beneath, with broad crescent-shaped, glandular-toothed stipules at base of petioles, five eighths to one inch long. According to Emerson, "Sir W. J. Hooker says it is one of the most generally diffused of all the willows in British North America."

Captain Hubbard said on Sunday that he had plowed up an Indian gouge, but how little impression that had made on him compared with the rotting of his cranberries or the loss of meadow-grass! It seemed to me that it made an inadequate impression compared with many trivial events. Suppose he had plowed up five dollars!

The botanist refers you, for wild [*sic*] and we presume wild plants, further inland or westward to so many miles from Boston, as if Nature or the Indians had

any such preferences. Perchance the ocean seemed wilder to them than the woods. As if there were primarily and essentially any more wildness in a western acre than an eastern one!

The *S. lucida* makes about the eleventh willow that I have distinguished. When I find a new and rare plant in Concord I seem to think it has but just sprung up here, — that it is, and not I am, the newcomer, — while it has grown here for ages before I was born. It transports me in imagination to the Saskatchewan. It grows alike on the bank of the Concord and of the Mackenzie River, proving them a kindred soil. I see their broad and glossy leaves reflecting the autumn light this moment all along those rivers. Through this leaf I communicate with the Indians who roam the boundless Northwest. It tastes the same nutriment in sand of the Assabet and its water as in that of the Saskatchewan and Jasper Lake, suggesting that a short time ago the shores of this river were as wild as the shores of those.

We are dwelling amid these wild plants still, we are eating the huckleberries which lately only the Indian ate and dried, we are raising and eating his wild and nutritive maize, and if we have imported wheat, it is but our wild rice, which we annually gather with grateful awe, like Chippewas. Potatoes are our groundnuts.

Spiranthes cernua, apparently some days at least, though not yet generally; a cool, late flower, growing with fringed gentian. I cannot yet even find the leaves of the latter — at the house-leek brook. I had come

to the Assabet, but could not wade the river, it was so deep and swift. The very meadow, poke-logan, was a quarter of a mile long and as deep as the river before. So I had come round over the bridge.

In Painted-Cup Meadow the ferns are yellowing, imbrowned, and crisped, as if touched by frost (?), yet it may be owing to the rains. It is evident that, at this season, excessive rain will ripen and kill the leaves as much as a drought does earlier. I think our strawberries recently set out have died, partly in consequence. Perhaps they need some dryness as well as warmth at this season. Plainly dog-days and rain have had the most to do as yet with the changing and falling of the leaves. So trees by water change earliest, sassafrases at Cardinal Shore, for example, while those on hill are not turned red at all. These ferns I see, with here and there a single maple bough turned scarlet, — this quite rare.

Some of the small early blueberry bushes are a clear red (*Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum*), and the lingering clusters of blueberries contrast strangely with the red leaves of the *V. vacillans*. Smooth sumachs show quite red on dry, warm hillsides.

While I am plucking the almost spicy blueberries amid the crimson leaves there on the springy slope, the cows gather toward the outlet of their pastures and low for the herdsman, reminding me that the day is drawing to a close.

Centaurea will apparently be entirely done in a week.

How deceptive these maps of western rivers! Me-

thought they were scattered according to the fancy of the map-maker, — were dry channels at best, — but it turns out that the Missouri at Nebraska City is three times as wide as the Mississippi at Burlington, and Grasshopper Creek, perhaps, will turn out to be as big as the Thames or Hudson.

There was an old gentleman here to-day who lived in Concord when he was young and remembers how Dr. Ripley talked to him and other little boys from the pulpit, as they came into church with their hands full of lilies, saying that those lilies looked so fresh that they must have been gathered that morning! Therefore they must have committed the sin of bathing this morning! Why, this is as sacred a river as the Ganges, sir.

I feel this difference between great poetry and small: that in the one, the sense outruns and overflows the words; in the other, the words the sense.

Sept. 3. P. M. — To Hubbard's Swamp for *Viburnum nudum* berries.

The river smooth, though full, with the autumn sheen on it, as on the leaves. I see painted tortoises with their entire backs covered with perfectly fresh clean black scales, such as no rubbing nor varnishing can produce, contrasting advantageously with brown and muddy ones. One little one floats past on a drifting pad which he partly sinks.

I find one sassafras berry, dark-blue in its crimson cup, club-shaped. It is chiefly stone, and its taste is like that of *tar* (!), methinks, far from palatable.

So many plants, the indigenous and the bewildering variety of exotics, you see in conservatories and nurserymen's catalogues, or read of in English books, and the Royal Society did not make one of them, and knows no more about them than you! All truly indigenous and wild on this earth. I know of no mark that betrays an introduced plant, as none but the gardener can tell what flower has strayed from its parterre; but where the seed will germinate and the plant spring and grow, there it is at home.

Weeds are uncultivated herbaceous plants which do not bear handsome flowers.

Polygala sanguinea is now as abundant, at least, as at any time, and perhaps more conspicuous in the meadows where I look for fringed gentian.

Gathered four or five quarts of *Viburnum nudum* berries, now in their prime, attracted more by the beauty of the cymes than the flavor of the fruit. The berries, which are of various sizes and forms, — elliptical, oblong, or globular, — are in different stages of maturity on the same cyme, and so of different colors, — green or white, rose-colored, and dark purple or black, — *i. e.* three or four very distinct and marked colors, side by side. If gathered when rose-colored, they soon turn dark purple and are soft and edible, though before bitter. They add a new and variegated wildness to the swampy sprout-lands. Remarkable for passing through so many stages of color before they arrive at maturity. A singular and pleasing contrast, also, do the different kinds of viburnum and cornel berries present when compared with each other.

The white berries of the panicled cornel, soon and apparently prematurely dropping from its pretty fingers, are very bitter. So also are those of the *C. sericea.*

One carrion-flower berry is turning blue in its dense spherical cluster. Castile-soap galls are crowding the more legitimate acorn on the shrub oak.

Sept. 4. P. M. — To Miles Swamp, Conantum.

What are those small yellow birds with two white bars on wings, about the oak at Hubbard's Grove? *Aralia racemosa* berries just ripe, at tall helianthus by bass [?] beyond William Wheeler's; not edible. Indian hemp out of bloom. Butterflies in road a day or two. The crackling flight of grasshoppers. The grass also is all alive with them, and they trouble me by getting into my shoes, which are loose, and obliging me to empty them occasionally. Measured an archangelica stem (now of course dry) in Corner Spring Swamp, eight feet eight inches high, and seven and a quarter inches in circumference at ground. It is a somewhat zigzag stem with few joints and a broad umbelliferous top, so that it makes a great show. One of those plants that have their fall early. There are many splendid scarlet arum berries there now in prime,[1] forming a dense ovate head on a short peduncle; the individual berries of various sizes, between pear and mitre and club form, flattened against each other on a singular (now purple and white) core, which is hollow. What rank and venomous luxuriance in this swamp sprout-land! *Viola pedata* again. I see where squirrels have

[1] And last ten days more at least.

eaten green sweet viburnum berries on the wall, together with hazelnuts. The former, gathered red, turn dark purple and shrivelled, like raisins, in the house, and are edible, but chiefly seed. The feverbush is conspicuously flower-budded. Even its spicy leaves have been cut by the tailor bee, and circular pieces taken out. He was, perhaps, attracted by its smoothness and soundness. Large puffballs, sometime.

Sept. 5. Friday. To Brattleboro, Vt.

Will not the prime of goldenrods and asters be just before the first severe frosts?

As I ride along in the cars, I think that the ferns, etc., are browned and crisped more than usual at this season, on account of the very wet weather.

Found on reaching Fitchburg that there was an interval of three and a half hours between this and the Brattleboro train, and so walked on, on the track, with shouldered valise. Had observed that the Nashua River in Shirley was about one mile west of Groton Junction, if I should ever want to walk there. Observed by railroad, in Fitchburg, low slippery elm shrubs with great, rough, one-sided leaves.

Solidago lanceolata past prime, a good deal. *Aster puniceus* in prime. About one mile from West Fitchburg depot, westward, I saw the panicled elder berries on the railroad but just beginning to redden, though it is said to ripen long before this. As I was walking through Westminster, I remembered that G. B. Emerson says that he saw a handsome clump of the *Salix lucida* on an island in Meeting-House Pond in this

town, and, looking round, I saw a shrub of it by the railroad, about one mile west of West Fitchburg depot, and several times afterward within a mile or two. Also in the brook behind Mr. Alcott's house in Walpole, N. H.

Took the cars again in Westminster. The scenery began to be mountainous and interesting in Royalston and Athol, but was more so in Erving. In Northfield first observed fields of broom-corn very common, *Sorghum saccharatum*, taller than corn. Alcott says they bend down the heads before they gather them, to fit them for brooms. Hereabouts women and children are already picking hops in the fields, in the shade of large white sheets, like sails.

Sept. 6. At Brattleboro.

Mr. Charles C. (?) Frost showed me a printed list of the flowers of B., furnished by him to a newspaper in B. some years since. He says he finds *Aster simplex* and *A. ptarmicoides* there (according to Oakes the latter is not found in New England out of Vermont), the latter now covered by the high water of the river; also *A. concinnus*, of Wood, perhaps (not in Gray) (*vide* specimen pressed); also *Solidago patula* and *serotina*, as well as *Canadensis* and *gigantea*. Also finds, he says, *Helianthus giganteus* (Oakes gives only *H. divaricatus* and *decapetalus* to Vermont), with quite small flowers, bank of river, behind town-house; and *decapetalus* and *strumosus*. Speaks of the fragrance of the dicksonia fern and the sensitiveness of the sensitive fern. If you take a tender plant by the stem, the warmth of your hand will cause the leaves to curl.

Thought my great dish-cover fungus a *Coprolus* (?) (so called from growing in dung?).

Read in Thompson's History of Vermont, which contains very good natural history, including a catalogue of the Plants of Vermont made by Oakes and, in the last edition, additional ones found by Frost.

A. M. — Walked down the railroad about a mile, returning partly by river-bank.

The depot is on the site of "Thunderbolt's" house. He was a Scotch highwayman. Called himself Dr. Wilson (?) when here. The prevailing polygonum in B. was a new one to me, *P. Pennsylvanicum*, but not roughish on the veins, apparently in prime, with the aspect of *P. Persicaria*, sometimes spreading and stretching four feet along a hillside, but commonly in rather low ground, roadsides. For the first time distinguish the *Aster cordifolius*, a prevailing one in B. and but just beginning to flower; like an *A. undulatus* with narrow-winged petioles and sharp-toothed leaves; amid bushes and edges of woods, sometimes four feet high, panicled.

I see the flowering raspberry still in bloom. This plant is quite common here. The fruit, now ripe, is red and quite agreeable, but not abundant. *Desmodium Canadense* still. Maple-leaved viburnum very abundant here, a prevailing shrub. Berries apparently now in prime, or a little earlier than this, ovoid, dull blue-black. Pluck some rose leaves by Connecticut (*vide* press), with now smooth, somewhat pear-shaped hips; not a sweet-briar. Also *Cornus circinata* berries, very light blue or bluish-white.

Cirsium discolor, roadside below depot, apparently in prime, much like *lanceolatum*, but smaller leaves, whitish beneath and inner scales unarmed.

Frost said that Dr. Kane left B. the morning of the day I arrived, and had given him a list of arctic plants brought home by him, which he showed me, — pages from his Report, in press.

The *Solidago Canadensis* very common, apparently in prime; also perfectly smooth ones with glaucous stems like some of ours. I am in doubt whether the last, or any that we have in Concord, is the *S. serotina* or *gigantea*. Frost says he distinguishes both, but Oakes does not give the *S. serotina* to Vermont. I should say *he* had but one kind, which varied from leaves rough above and on the veins beneath, and stems smooth below and pubescent above, to leaves quite smooth on both sides and stems very smooth and glaucous; rays also vary very much in size. Or are these only varieties of the *Canadensis*??

I find small grapes a third of an inch in diameter, many ripe, on the bank of the Connecticut, — pleasantly acid. Clusters three to four or five inches long. The leaves are sharply toothed and green on both sides. Is it the *Vitis cordifolia*?[1] I see also a vine with leaves rusty-downy beneath and not conspicuously toothed, with equally small now green grapes, apparently like ours. Is not this *V. æstivalis*? Of the latter the berries are said to be pleasant, and ripe in October.[2]

[1] Apparently it is, but berries already ripe.

[2] *Vide* Oct. 27, 1856.

Eupatorium ageratoides, white snake-root, in rather low ground or on banks along riverside, apparently in prime. Apparently *Helianthus decapetalus*, or cut-toothed helianthus, the teeth much larger than with us. *Solidago arguta* very common, apparently in prime, with sharp-toothed, more or less elliptic leaves and slender terminal drooping racemes; size of *S. stricta*.

Sept. 7. *Sunday.*[1] At Brattleboro, Vt. A. M. — Climbed the hill behind Mr. Addison Brown's.

The leaves of the *Tiarella cordifolia* very abundant in the woods, but hardly sharp-lobed. Also observed the leaves of the *Hepatica triloba*. Was that *Sium lineare* in the pool on the hilltop? Oakes allows only *S. latifolium* to grow in Vermont. The seeds are apparently ribbed like ours. (*Vide* press.) Found the lemna mantling that pool. Mrs. Brown has found it in flower there. Flowering dogwood on hill.

P. M. — Up the bank of the Connecticut to West River, up that to a brook, and up that nearly to hospital.

The Connecticut, though unusually high (several feet more than usual), looks low, there being four or five or six rods of bare gravel on each side, and the bushes and weeds covered with clayey soil from a freshet. Not a boat to be seen on it. The Concord is worth a hundred of it for my purposes. It looks narrow as well as shallow. No doubt it is dwarfed by

[1] [The manuscript volume which begins with this date has on its first page, "The cold winter and warm February."]

the mountain rising directly from it in front, which, as usual, looking nearer than it is, makes the opposite shore seem nearer.

The *Solidago Canadensis*, and the smooth three-ribbed one, and *nemoralis*, etc., the helianthus (apparently *decapetalus*), and *Aster* or *Diplopappus linariifolius*, *Vitis cordifolius* (?) (now beginning to be ripe) are quite common along the bank. On a bank-side on West River, *Urtica Canadensis*, apparently in prime and going to seed, the same that Mr. Whitlow once recommended as a substitute for hemp. Near by the phryma, or lopseed, with still a few small rose-white flowers. I at first thought it a circæa. Plenty of harebells thereabouts, and, by the brook, *Polygonum Virginianum*, three feet high, mostly gone to seed. Apparently *Cornus stolonifera* (?) by brook (*vide* press), with the *sericea*. *Aster macrophyllus* much past prime.

Sept. 8. Brattleboro. — Rains.

Frost gives me an aster which he thinks *A. concinnus* of Wood; grows in woods and yet longer leaved.

P. M. — Clearing up. I went a-botanizing by the Coldwater Path, for the most part along a steep wooded hillside on Whetstone Brook and through its interval.

In the last heavy rain, two or three weeks since, there was a remarkable freshet on this brook, such as has not been known before, the bridge and road carried away, the bed of the stream laid bare, a new channel being made, the interval covered with sand and gravel, and trees (buttonwood, etc.) brought

down; several acres thus buried. Frost escaped from his house on a raft. I observed a stream of large bare white rocks four or five rods wide, which at first I thought had been washed down, but it seems this was the former bed of the stream, it having worn a new channel further east.

Witch-hazel out, maybe a day or two, in some places, but the Browns do not think the fringed gentian out yet.

There for the first time I see growing indigenously the *Dirca palustris*, leather-wood, the largest on the low interval by the brook. I notice a bush there seven feet high. In its form it is somewhat like a quince bush, though less spreading, its leaves broad, like entire sassafras leaves; now beginning to turn yellow. It has a remarkably strong thick bark and soft white wood which bends like lead (Gray says it is brittle!), the different layers separating at the end. I cut a good-sized switch, which was singularly tough and flexible, just like a cowhide, and would answer the purpose of one admirably. The color of the bark is a very pale brown. I was much interested in this shrub, since it was the Indian's rope. Frost said that the farmers of Vermont used it to tie up their fences with. Certainly there can be no wood equal to it as a withe. He says it is still strong when dry. I should think it would be worth the while for the farmers to cultivate for this purpose. How often in the woods and fields we want a string or rope and cannot find one. This is the plant which Nature has made for this purpose. The Browns gave me some of the flowers, which ap-

pear very early in spring. Gray says that in northern New England it is called *wicopy*. Potter, in History of Manchester, says Indians sewed canoes with it. Beck says, "The bark has a sweetish taste, and when chewed excites a burning sensation in the fauces," and, according to Emerson, the bark of this family, "taken into the stomach causes heat and vomiting, or purging." According to the latter, cordage has been made from the bark of this family, also paper. Emerson says of this plant in particular, "The fresh bark produces a sensation of heat in the stomach, and at last brings on vomiting. . . . It has such strength that a man cannot pull apart so much as covers a branch of half or a third of an inch in diameter. It is used by millers and others for thongs." Indian cordage. I feel as if I had discovered a more indigenous plant than usual, it was so peculiarly useful to the aborigines.

On that wooded hillside, I find small-flowered asters, *A. miser*-like, hairy, but very long linear leaves; possibly the var. *hirsuta* of *A. miser* (Oakes gives of *A. miser*, only the var. *hirsuticaulis* to Vermont) or else a neighboring species, for they seem distinct. (*Vide* press.) There is the hobble-bush with its berries and large roundish leaves, now beginning to turn a deep dull crimson red. Also mountain maples, with sharp-lobed leaves and downy beneath, the young plants numerous. The *Ribes cynosbati*, or prickly gooseberry, with its bur-like fruit, dry and still hanging here and there. Also the ground-hemlock, with its beautiful fruit, like a red waxen cup with a purple (?)

fruit in it. By the edge of a ditch, where it had been overwhelmed and buried with mud by the later freshet, the *Solidago Muhlenbergii* in its prime. (*Vide* press.) Near by, on the bank of the ditch, leaves of coltsfoot. I had cut across the interval, but, taking to the Coldwater Path again near its southeast end, I found, at an angle in it near the canal, beech-drops under a beech, not yet out, and the *Equisetum scirpoides*, also radical leaves, very broad, perhaps of a sedge, some much longer. (*Vide* press.)

Gathered flowering raspberries in all my walks and found them a pleasant berry, large, but never abundant. In a wet place on the interval the *Veronica Americana*, according to Frost (*beccabunga* of some), not in bloom. Along this path observed the *Nabalus altissimus*, flowers in a long panicle of axillary and terminal branches, small-flowered, now in prime. Leaves apparently of *Oxalis Acetosella*. Large roundish radical leaves on the moist wooded hillside, which the Browns thought of the round-leaved violet. Low, flat-topped, very rough hairy, apparently *Aster acuminatus*. *Erigeron annuus*, broad, thin, toothed leaves. Also another, perhaps hirsute *A. miser*, with toothed leaves.

I hear that two thousand dollars' worth of huckleberries have been sold by the town of Ashby this season.

Also gathered on this walk the *Polypodium Dryopteris* and *Polystichum acrostichoides* and a short heavy-odored (like stramonium) plant with aspect of lilac, not in bloom. (*Vide* press.)

Sept. 9. *Tuesday.* 8 A. M. — Ascend the Chesterfield Mountain with Miss Frances and Miss Mary Brown.

The Connecticut is about twenty rods wide between Brattleboro and Hinsdale. This mountain, according to Frost, 1064 feet high. It is the most remarkable feature here. The village of Brattleboro is peculiar for the nearness of the primitive wood and the mountain. Within three rods of Brown's house was excellent botanical ground on the side of a primitive wooded hillside, and still better along the Coldwater Path. But, above all, this everlasting mountain is forever lowering over the village, shortening the day and wearing a misty cap each morning. You look up to its top at a steep angle from the village streets. A great part belongs to the Insane Asylum. This town will be convicted of folly if they ever permit this mountain to be laid bare. Francis [*sic*] B. says its Indian name is Wantastiquet, from the name of West River above. Very abundant about B. the *Gerardia tenuifolia*, in prime, which I at first mistook for the *purpurea*. The latter I did not see. High up the mountain the *Aster macrophyllus* as well as *corymbosus*. The (apparently) *Platanthera orbiculata* (?) leaves, round and flat on ground (*vide* press); another by it with larger and more oblong leaves. Pine-sap. A tuft of five-divided leaves, fifteen or eighteen inches high, slightly fern-like (*vide* press). *Galium circæzans* var. *lanceolatum*. Top of the mountain covered with wood. Saw Ascutney, between forty and fifty miles up the river, but not Monadnock on account of woods.

P. M. — To and up a brook north of Brown's house. A large alternate cornel, four or five inches in diameter, a dark-gray stem. The kidney-shaped leaves of the *Asarum Canadense* common there. *Panax quinquefolium*, with peculiar flat scarlet fruit in a little umbel. *Clinopodium vulgare*, or basil, apparently flatted down by a freshet, rather past prime; and spearmint in brook just above. Close behind Brown's, *Liparis liliifolia*, or tway-blade, leaves and bulb.

A very interesting sight from the top of the mountain was that of the cars so nearly under you, apparently creeping along, you could see so much of their course.

The epigæa was very abundant on the hill behind Brown's and elsewhere in B. The *Populus monilifera* grows on West River, but I did not see it. The *Erigeron Philadelphicus* I saw pressed, with innumerable fine rays. Scouring-rush was common along the Coldwater Path and elsewhere.

The most interesting sight I saw in Brattleboro was the skin and skull of a panther (*Felis concolor*) (cougar, catamount, painter, American lion, puma), which was killed, according to a written notice attached, on the 15th of June by the Saranac Club of Brattleboro, six young men, on a fishing and hunting excursion. This paper described it as eight feet in extreme length and weighing one hundred and ten pounds. The Brattleboro newspaper says its body was "4 feet 11 inches in length, and the tail 2 feet 9 inches; the animal weighed 108 pounds." I was surprised at its great size and apparent strength. It gave one a new idea of our American forests and the vigor of nature here. It

was evident that it could level a platoon of men with a stroke of its paw. I was particularly impressed by the size of its limbs, the size of its canine teeth, and its great white claws. I do not see but this affords a sufficient foundation for the stories of the lion heard and its skins seen near Boston by the first settlers. This creature was very catlike, though the tail was not tapering, but as large at the extremity as anywhere, yet not tufted like the lion's. It had a long neck, a long thin body, like a lean cat. Its fore feet were about six inches long by four or five wide, as set up.

I talked with the man who shot him, a Mr. Kellogg, a lawyer. They were fishing on one of the Saranac Lakes, their guide being the Harvey Moody whom Hammond describes, when they heard the noise of some creature threshing about amid the bushes on the hillside. The guide suspected that it was a panther which had caught a deer. He reconnoitred and found that it was a panther which had got one fore paw (the left) in one of his great double-spring, long teethed or hooked bear-traps. He had several of these traps set (without bait) in the neighborhood. It fell to Kellogg's lot to advance with the guide and shoot him. They approached within six or seven rods, saw that the panther was held firmly, and fired just as he raised his head to look at them. The ball entered just above his nose, pierced his brain, and killed him at once. The guide got the bounty of twenty-five dollars, but the game fell to his employers. A slice had been sheared off one side of each ear to secure this with. It was a male. The guide thought it an old

one, but Kellogg said that, as they were returning with it, the inhabitants regarded it as common; they only kicked it aside in the road, remarking that [it] was a large one.

I talked also with the Mr. Chamberlin who set it up. He showed me how sharp the edges of the broad grinders were just behind the canine teeth. They were zigzag, thus: and shut over the under, scraping close like shears and, as he proved, would cut off a straw clean. This animal looked very thin as set up, and probably in some states of his body would have weighed much more. Kellogg said that, freshly killed, the body *showed the nerves* much more than as set up. The color, etc., agreed very well with the account in Thompson's History of Vermont, except that there was, now at least, no yellow about the mouth or chin, but whitish. It was, in the main, the universal color of this family, or a little browner. According to Thompson, it is brown-red on the back, reddish-gray on the sides, whitish or light-ash on the belly; tail like the back above, except its extremity, which is brownish-black, not tufted; chin, upper lip, and inside of ears, yellowish-white. Hairs on back, short, brownish tipped with red; on the belly, longer, lighter, tipped with white; hairs of face like back with whitish hairs intermingled. Canines conical, claws pearly-white. Length, nose to tail, four feet eight inches; tail, two feet six inches; top of head to point of nose, ten inches; width across forehead, eight inches. Length of fore legs, one foot two inches; hind, one foot four inches. Weight usually about one

hundred pounds. The largest he ever knew was seven feet in extreme length and weighed one hundred and eighteen pounds. One had been known to leap up a precipice fifteen feet high with a calf in his mouth. *Vide* Lawson, Hunter, and Jefferson in Book of Facts. Hunter when near the Rocky Mountains says, "So much were they to be apprehended . . . that no one ever ventured to go out alone, even on the most trifling occasion." He makes two kinds.

Emmons makes the extreme length of one of the largest cougars nine feet four inches, and the greatest length of the canine tooth of the upper jaw from the gum nine tenths of an inch. I think that the teeth of the one I saw were much larger. Says it is cowardly and "rarely if ever attacks man;" that a hunter met five in St. Lawrence County, N. Y., and, with his dog and gun only, killed three that day and the other two the next. Yet he will follow a man's track a great distance. Scream at evening heard for miles. Thinks about 45° its northern range.[1]

Sept. 10. 10.30 A. M. — Took the cars to Bellows Falls, through Dummerston, Putney, and Westminster.

Looked at the falls and rocks. River higher than usual at this season, yet could cross all but about twenty feet on the rocks. Some pot-holes of this form: real pot-holes, but commonly several curves commingled, thus: or the whole more rounded. Found, spreading prostrate on the rocks amid the

[1] *Vide* forward, Oct. 4th and 25th.

pot-holes, apparently a small willow,[1] with shining dark-red stems and smooth, spatulate, rather obtuse serrate leaves. (*Vide* press.) I read that salmon passed these falls but not shad. When the water is lowest, it is contracted to sixteen feet here, and Peters's, an old history of Connecticut, says it was so condensed that you could not thrust a crowbar into it. It did me good to read his wholesale hearty statements,—strong, living, human speech, so much better than the emasculated modern histories, like Bancroft's and the rest, cursed with a style.[2] I would rather read such histories, though every sentence were a falsehood, than our dull emasculated reports which bear the name of histories. The former, having a human breath and interest behind them, are nearer to nature and to truth, after all. The historian is required to feel a human interest in his subject and to so express it. President Dwight, speaking of the origin of those pot-holes, says, "The river now is often fuller than it probably ever was before the country above was cleared of its forests: the snows in open ground melting much more suddenly, and forming much greater freshets, than in forested ground." (Vol. ii, page 92.)

Ascended the Fall Mountain with a heavy valise on my back, against the advice of the toll-man. But when I got up so soon and easily I was amused to remember his anxiety. It is seven hundred and fifty feet high, according to Gazetteer. Saw great red oaks on this hill, particularly tall, straight, and bare of limbs,

[1] *Prunus depressa.*

[2] [Channing, p. 272. C. puts "Prescott's" for "Bancroft's."]

for a great distance, amid the woods. Here, as at Brattleboro, a fine view of the country immediately beneath you; but these views lack breadth, a distant horizon. There is a complete view of the falls from this height.

Saw a pair of middle-sized black hawks hovering about this cliff, with some white spots, with peculiar shrill snapping notes like a gull, a new kind to me.

Descending the steep south end of this hill, I saw an apparent *Corydalis glauca*, mostly withered, three feet or more, and more than usually broad and stout in proportion. (*Vide* press.) My shoes were very smooth, and I got many falls descending, battering my valise. By the railroad below, the *Solanum nigrum*, with white flowers but yet green fruit.

Just after crossing Cold River, bathed in the Connecticut, evidently not far from site of the old Kilbourn fort. Clay-muddy shore. Near the site of the old Bellows Fort, saw completely purple *Polygala verticillata* abundant in road.

Rode the last mile into Walpole with a lumberer, who said that when he commenced operations at Bellows Falls he thought that there was not more than one hundred thousand there, but they had already got out four millions. He imported some of those masts I had seen go through Concord from Canada West. They were rafted along Lake Erie (a Mr. Dorr of Buffalo afterward told me that he did this part with steamers, merely running an inch chain through the butt of each log and fastening the ends to a boom, which surrounded the whole, leaving the small ends to play) and in small rafts by canal to Albany, and

thence by railroad *via* Rutland to Portland, for the navy; and it cost only one third more to get them from Canada West than from Bellows Falls. Remembering the difficulty in old times of loading one of these sticks in New Hampshire for the King's Navy, this seemed the greatest triumph of the railroad.

In Walpole, the *Chenopodium Botrys*.

Sept. 11. P. M. — Walked over what Alcott calls Farm Hill, east of his house.

Erigeron annuus, four feet high, by roadside; also *Ranunculus Pennsylvanicus*, or bristly crowfoot, still in bloom. *Vide* press. A fine view of the Connecticut valley from the hilltop, and of Ascutney Mountain, but not of Monadnock. Descended a steep side of the hill by a cow-path, made with great judgment regularly zigzag, thus: well worn and deep. Visited the grave-yard and Colonel Benjamin Bellows, the founder's, gravestone and more recent monument.

In the evening read an interesting pamphlet account of the Bellows family of Walpole, prepared by Dr. Bellows of New York, on occasion of the family gathering and erection of the monument. A large part of the inhabitants of Walpole are descendants of Colonel B. Bellows. The writer quotes from a paper in "the Cheshire *Gazette* of April 28, 1826," "understood to be prepared by our respected townsman, Dr. Morse," Dr. B. saying first, "A Mrs. Watson of Germantown, Pennsylvania, was alive in 1826, who resided in Wal-

pole in 1762, then only 8 years old," but she had a remarkable memory. He then quotes Morse, who states that her father came and built a house in Walpole in 1762. "The roof of the house was covered with bark, and the gable ends remained open some time, which enabled them to hear the barking of foxes, the howling of wolves, and the cries of the panther, while sitting before the fire. The latter resembled the voice of a woman in distress, and [seemed][1] intended to decoy people into the woods, where the salutations of these roving gentry were apt to prove troublesome, unless prevented by the presence of fire-arms." According to this woman (and Morse), "a shad was taken near the falls which had a rattlesnake's head in its stomach."

Dr. B. states that there is a tradition that the founder, Colonel B., once killed, on Fall Mountain, two bears and a very large panther, which last alarmed him considerably. According to Morse and the woman, "a large portion of pin money was derived from the sale of golden thread, ginseng, and snakeroot, which were procured from their [the ladies'][2] own hands." This should probably be "lands," or the preposition, "by."

In Alcott's yard, sprung up from his bird's seed, hemp, like common except fragrant.[3]

These are the plants I obtained on this excursion: —

Panicled elder *berries*, Fitchburg.
Aster concinnus (?), Frost, Brattleboro.

[1] [This word is probably supplied by Thoreau.]
[2] [Thoreau's brackets.] [3] So is ours.

Solidago Canadensis.
A. cordifolius.
Urtica gracilis (?).
Pear-hipped rose.
Vitis cordifolia.
Eupatorium ageratoides.
Helianthus decapetalus.
Solidago arguta.
A. tenuifolius (?), Frost.
Hepatica triloba, leaves.
Tiarella cordifolia, leaves and dried stem.
Sium lineare (?).
Urtica Canadensis.
Phryma Leptostachya.
Campanula rotundifolia.
Polygonum Virginianum.
Cornus stolonifera (?).
Dirca palustris, leaves.
A. miser var. *hirsuta* (?).
Viburnum lantanoides, leaves.
Acer spicatum, leaves.
Ribes cynosbati, in fruit.
Taxus Canadensis, in fruit.
Solidago Muhlenbergii.
Tussilago Farfara, leaves.
Epiphegus Americana.
Equisetum scirpoides.
Veronica Americana, not in flower.
Nabalus altissimus.
Oxalis Acetosella, leaves.
Viola rotundifolia (??), radical leaves.
Erigeron annuus.
Polypodium Dryopteris, in fruit.
Heavy scented plant.
Gerardia tenuifolia.
Platanthera orbiculata (?), out of bloom.
Tufted and divided leaves on mountain.
Aster, *longifolius*-like, on Island.

Asarum Canadense, leaves.
Panax quinquefolium, in fruit.
Clinopodium vulgare.
Liparis liliifolia, not in flower.
Red-stemmed willow at Bellows Falls.
Solanum nigrum, Walpole.
Purple *Polygala verticillata*, Walpole.
Ranunculus Pennsylvanicus, Walpole.
Cannabis, a fragrant kind, Walpole.

Also these were given me, pressed by the Browns:—

Dentaria diphylla.
Viburnum lantanoides, in flower.
Trillium erectum.
Epigæa (fairer than ours).
Sanguinaria Canadensis.
Erythronium Americanum.
Arabis lævigata.
Viola rostrata.
Panax trifolium.
Pulsatilla patens, leaves.
Tussilago Farfara, without leaves.
A. Ribes.
Hepatica triloba.
H. acutiloba, leaves (flowers same?).
Mitella diphylla.

Sept. 12. Return to Concord.

Sept. 13. *Saturday*. At Concord. — After all, I am struck by the greater luxuriance of the same species of plants here than up-country, though our soil is considered leaner. Also I think that no view I have had of the Connecticut Valley, at Brattleboro or Walpole, is equal to that of the Concord from Nawshaw-

tuct. Here is a more interesting horizon, more variety and richness. Our river is much the most fertile in every sense. Up there it is nothing but river-valley and hills. Here there is so much more that we have forgotten that we live in a valley.

8 A. M. — Up Assabet.

Gathered quite a parcel of grapes, quite ripe. Difficult to break off the large bunches without some dropping off. Yet the best are more admirable for fragrance than for flavor. Depositing them in the bows of the boat, they filled all the air with their fragrance, as we rowed along against the wind, as if we were rowing through an endless vineyard in its maturity.

The *Aster Tradescanti* now sugars the banks densely, since I left, a week ago. Nature improves this her last opportunity to empty her lap of flowers.

Ascended the hill. The barberries are abundant there, and already handsomely red, though not much more than half turned. Was surprised at the profusion of autumnal dandelions in their prime on *the top of the hill*, about the oaks. Never saw them thicker in a meadow. A cool, spring-suggesting yellow. They reserve their force till this season, though they begin so early. Cool to the eye, as the creak of the cricket to the ear.

The *Viburnum Lentago*, which I left not half turned red when I went up-country a week ago, are now quite black-purple and shrivelled like raisins on my table, and sweet to taste, though chiefly seed.

Sept. 14. P. M. — To Hubbard's Close and Cardinal Ditch.

Now for the *Aster Tradescanti* along low roads, like the Turnpike, swarming with butterflies and bees. Some of them are pink. How ever unexpected are these later flowers! You thought that Nature had about wound up her affairs. You had seen what she could do this year, and had not noticed a few weeds by the roadside, or mistook them for the remains of summer flowers now hastening to their fall; you thought you knew every twig and leaf by the roadside, and nothing more was to be looked for there; and now, to your surprise, these ditches are crowded with millions of little stars. They suddenly spring up and face you, with their legions on each side the way, as if they had lain in ambuscade there. The flowering of the ditches. Call them travellers' thoughts, numerous though small, worth a penny at least, which, sown in spring and summer, in the fall spring up unobserved at first, successively dusted and washed, mingled with nettles and beggar-ticks as a highway harvest. A starry meteoric shower, a milky way, in the flowery kingdom in whose aisles we travel. Let the traveller bethink himself, elevate and expand his thoughts somewhat, that his successors may oftener hereafter be cheered by the sight of an *Aster Novæ-Angliæ* or *spectabilis* here and there, to remind him that a poet or philosopher has passed this way. The gardener with all his assiduity does not raise such a variety, nor so many successive crops on the same space, as Nature in the very roadside ditches. There they have stood, begrimed

with dust and the wash of the road so long, and made acquaintance with passing sheep and cattle and swine, gathering a trivial experience, and now at last the fall rains have come to wash off some of that dust, and even they exhibit these dense flowery panicles as the result of all that experience, as pure for an hour as if they grew by some wild brook-side. Successor to Mayweed & Co. Is not mayweed, by the way, the flower furthest advanced into the road rut or mid-channel, like the kalmiana lily in the river? The mid-channel, where the stream of travel flows deep and strong, unless it is far up the stream toward its fountainhead, no flower invades. Mayweed! what a misnomer! Call it *rut-weed* rather.

Goodyera pubescens apparently just done. Fringed gentian well out (and some withered or frost-bitten?), say a week, though there was none to be seen here August 27th. I see the fruit and flowers of *Polygonum Careyi* affected with smut like corn.

Sept. 15. *Monday.* Sophia says, bringing company into my sanctum, by way of apology, that I regard the dust on my furniture like the bloom on fruits, not to be swept off. Which reminds me that the bloom on fruits and stems is the only dust which settles on Nature's furniture.

P. M. — To Hubbard's Swamp.

Aster longifolius and *puniceus* and *Spiranthes cernua* in prime. Early *Solidago stricta* [1] done, but some putting out again in the axils, while dead at top,

[1] That is, *arguta*.

maybe owing to the rains. Meadow-sweet lingers yet!

What I must call *Bidens cernua*, like a small *chrysanthemoides*, is *bristly hairy*, *somewhat* connate and apparently regularly toothed. The hypericums generally appear to be now about done. I see none.

Sept. 16. P. M. — To Harris's Mill, Acton, with Father.

Aster lævis apparently in prime; very handsome its long, slanting, broad-topped wands by the roadside, even in dry soil, its rays longer and richer purple than usual. See a flock of pigeons dash by. From a stout breast they taper straightly and slenderly to the tail. They have been catching them a while.

William Monroe is said to have been the first who raised teasels about here. He was very sly about it, and fearful lest he should have competitors. At length he lent his wagon to a neighbor, who discovered some teasel seed on the bottom, which he carefully saved and planted, and so competed with Monroe.

Sept. 18. P. M. — By boat to Conantum, barberrying.

Diplopappus linariifolius in prime. River gone down more than I expected after the great rise, to within some eighteen inches of low-water mark, but on account of freshet I have seen no *Bidens Beckii* nor *chrysanthemoides* nor *Polygonum amphibium* var. *aquaticum* in it, nor elsewhere the myriophyllums this year. The witch-hazel at Conantum just begun here and there; some may have been out two or three days. It is apparently

later with us than the fringed gentian, which I have supposed was out by September 7th. Yet I saw the witch-hazel out in Brattleboro September 8th, then apparently for a day or two, while the Browns *thought* the gentian was not out. It is still a question, perhaps, though unquestionably the gentian is now far more generally out here than the hazel. Lespedezas, *violacea*, *hirta*, *Stuvei*, etc., — at Blackberry Steep, done. *Solidago cæsia* in prime at Bittern Cliff Wood.

The barberries are not fairly turned, but I gather them that I may not be anticipated, — a peck of large ones. I strip off a whole row of racemes at one sweep, bending the prickles and getting as few leaves as possible, so getting a handful at once. The racemes appear unusually long this season, and the berries large, though not so thick as I have seen them. I consider myself a dextrous barberry-picker, as if I had been born in the Barberry States. A pair of gloves would be convenient, for, with all my knack, it will be some days before I get all the prickles out of my fingers. I get a full peck from about three bushes.

Scared up the same flock of four apparent summer ducks, which, what with myself, a belated (in season) haymaker, and a fisherman above, have hardly a resting-place left. The fisherman takes it for granted that I am after ducks or fishes, surely.

I see no traces of frost yet along the river. See no pontederia fall, for they are covered with water. The *Cornus sericea* is most changed and drooping. Smilacina berries of both kinds now commonly ripe, but not so edible as at first, methinks.

Sept. 19. Am surprised to find the *Polygonum Pennsylvanicum* abundant, by the roadside near the bank. First saw it the other day at Brattleboro. This makes, as I reckon, twenty polygonums that I know, all but *cilinode* and *Virginianum* in Concord. Is not this a late kind? It grows larger than the *Persicaria.* Observed an *Aster undulatus* behind oak at foot of hill on Assabet, with lower leaves not heart-shaped, but thus:

Gathered just half a bushel of barberries on hill in less than two hours, or three pecks to-day and yesterday in less than three hours. It is singular that I have so few, if any, competitors. I have the pleasure also of bringing them home in my boat. They will be more valuable this year, since apples and cranberries are scarce. These barberries are more than the apple crop to me, for we shall have them on the table daily all winter, while the two barrels of apples which we lay up will not amount to so much.

Also, what is the pear crop to the huckleberry crop? They make a great ado about their pears, those who get any, but how many families raise or buy a barrel of pears all told? The pear crop is insignificant compared with the huckleberry crop. The one does not concern me, the other does. I do not taste more than six pears annually, and I suspect the majority fare worse than I, but nature heaps the table with berries for six weeks or more. Indeed the apple crop is not so important as the huckleberry crop. Probably the apples consumed in this town do not amount to more than one barrel a family, but what is this to a month

or more of huckleberrying for every man, woman, and child, and the birds into the bargain? They are not unprofitable in a pecuniary sense. I hear that some of the inhabitants of Ashby have sold two thousand dollars' worth the past season.

Sept. 20. Melvin says that there are many teal about the river now.

Rain in afternoon. Rain again in the night, hard.

Sept. 21. P. M. — To Cliffs.

Asclepias Cornuti discounting. The seeded parachutes which I release soon come to earth, but probably if they waited for a stronger wind to release them they would be carried far. *Solidago nemoralis* mostly done. *Aster undulatus* in prime, in the dry woods just beyond Hayden's, large slanting, pyramidal panicles of some lilac-tinged, others quite white, flowers, size of *Diplopappus linariifolius*. *Solidago altissima* past prime. Prinos berries. I hear of late faint *chewink* notes in the shrubbery, as if they were meditating their strains in a subdued tone against another year. *A. dumosus* past prime.

Am surprised to see on top of Cliffs, where Wheeler burned in the spring and had cut rye, by a large rock, some very large perfectly fresh *Corydalis glauca*, still well in bloom as well as gone to seed, two and a half feet high and five eighths of an inch thick at base. There are also many large tufts of its glaucous leaves on the black burnt ground which have not come to flower, amid the rye stubble. The bumblebees are

sucking its flowers. Beside the young oak and the sprouts, poke-weed, erechthites, and this corydalis even are common there. How far is this due to the fire, aside from the clearing? Was not the fireweed seed sown by the wind last fall, blown into the woods, where there was a lull which caused it to settle? Perhaps it is fitted to escape or resist fire. The wind which the fire creates may, perchance, lift it again out of harm's way.

The *Asclepias, obtusifolia* is turned yellow. I see its often perfectly upright slender pod five inches long, thus:[1] On top of Cliff, behind the big stump, a yellow white goldenrod, var. *concolor*, which Gray refers to Pennsylvania, apparently with the common. That is a great place for white goldenrod, now in its prime and swarming with honey-bees.

Scare up turtle doves in the stubble. Uva-ursi berries quite ripe. Find, for first time in Concord, *Solanum nigrum*, berries apparently just ripe, by a rock northwest of corydalis. Thus I have within a week found in Concord two of the new plants I found up-country. Such is the advantage of going abroad, — to enable [you] to detect your own plants. I detected them first abroad, because there I was *looking for* the *strange*.

It is a warm and very hazy day, with wreaths of mist in horizon.

[1] It soon bursts in my chamber and shows its beautiful straw-colored lining. A fairy-like casket, shaped like a canoe, with its closely packed imbricated brown seeds, with their yet compressed silvery parachutes like finest unsoiled silk in the right position *above* them, ready to be wafted some dry and breezy day to their destined places.

Saw, in the cow-killer on railroad, a small mountain-ash naturalized!

Sept. 22. A rainy day. Tried some pennyroyal tea, but found it too medicinal for my taste. Yet I collect these herbs, biding the time when their use shall be discovered.

Sept. 23. Rainy day.

Sept. 24. P. M. — To Saw Mill Brook.

Not a sign of an artichoke flower yet below Moore's! May they not be earlier elsewhere?

At brook, cohush and arum berries still fresh, and *Viburnum acerifolium* berries. Apparently *Asplenium Thelypteroides*, a large fern, its under side covered with linear fruit.

Methinks it stands thus with goldenrods and asters now: —

Early *S. stricta*, done some time.
Swamp " " *probably* past prime.
My *S. gigantea* (?), *probably* done.
S. nemoralis, about done.
S. altissima, much past prime.
S. odora, not seen but *probably* done.
S. puberula, say in good condition, or in prime.
S. bicolor and var. *concolor*, in prime.
S. lanceolata, say done.
S. latifolia, in prime.
S. cæsia, in prime.
S. speciosa (none the 15th).[1]
Early meadow aster, say done long time.

[1] Not quite out the 26th of September.

Diplopappus cornifolius, not seen of late.
D. umbellatus, still abundant.
A. patens, some still fresh but not common.
A. macrophyllus, not observed of late.
A. acuminatus, not observed at all in C.
A. Radula, probably about done, not seen of late.
A. dumosus, considerably past prime.
D. linariifolius, in prime, abundant.
A. undulatus, in prime, abundant.
A. corymbosus, still fresh though probably past prime.
A. lævis, probably still in prime.
A. Tradescanti, in prime.
A. puniceus, still in prime (??).
A. longifolius, in prime.
A. multiflorus, in prime.[1]

Sept. 25. The river has risen again *considerably* (this I believe the fourth time), owing to the late copious rains. This before the farmers have succeeded in their *late* attempt to get their meadow-hay after all.

It had not got down before this last rain but to within some eighteen inches, at least, of the usual level in September.

P. M. — To Harrington road.

A golden-crowned thrush runs off, a few feet at a time, on hillside on Harrington road, as if she had a nest still! The haws of the common [thorn] are now very good eating and handsome. Some of the *Cratægus Crus-Galli* on the old fence line between Tarbell and T. Wheeler beyond brook are smaller, stale, and not good at all. The urtica just beyond Widow Hosmer's barn *appears* the same with that I called *U. gracilis* (?) in Brattleboro.

[1] Oct. 8. *A. miser* (omitted), say still in prime or very common.

Sept. 27. The bluebird family revisit their box and warble as in spring.

P. M. — To Clamshell by boat.

Solidago speciosa not quite out!! *Viburnum nudum* berries are soon gone. I noticed none to speak of in Hubbard's Swamp, September 15th. Start up a snipe in the meadow. Bathed at Hubbard's Bath, but found the water very cold. Bathing about over.

It is a very fine afternoon to be on the water, somewhat Indian-summer-like. I do not know what constitutes the peculiarity and charm of this weather; the broad water so smooth, notwithstanding the slight wind, as if, owing to some oiliness, the wind slid over without ruffling it. There is a slight coolness in the air, yet the sun is occasionally very warm. I am tempted to say that the air is singularly clear, yet I see it is quite hazy. Perhaps it is that transparency it is said to possess when full of moisture and before or after rain. Through this I see the colors of trees and shrubs beginning to put on their October dress, and the creak of the mole cricket sounds late along the shore.

The *Aster multiflorus* may easily be confounded with the *A. Tradescanti.* Like it, it whitens the roadside in some places. It has purplish disks, but a less straggling top than the *Tradescanti.*

Sept. 28. P. M. — To old mill-site behind Ponkawtasset.

Poke berries in the sprout-land east of the red huckleberry still fresh and abundant, perhaps a little past prime. I never saw so many. The plants stand

close together, and their drooping racemes three to five inches long, of black or purplish-black berries (ending in red and less [an indecipherable word]), almost crowd one another, hanging around the bright-purple, now for the most part bare, stems. I hear some birds about, but see none feeding on the berries. I could soon gather bushels there.

The arum berries are still fresh and abundant, perhaps in their prime. A large cluster is two and a half inches long by two wide and rather flattish. One, which has ripened prematurely, the stalk being withered and drooping, resembles a very short thick ear of scarlet corn. *This* might well enough be called snake-corn. These singular vermilion-colored berries, about a hundred of them, surmount a purple bag on a peduncle six or eight inches long. It is one of the most remarkable and dazzling, if not the handsomest, fruits we have. These were by violet wood-sorrel wall. How many fruits are scarlet now! — barberries, prinos, etc.

A flock of vireo-like, somewhat yellowish birds, very neat, white beneath and olive above, in garden.

Sept. 29. P. M. — To Grape Cliff.

The pea-vine fruit is partly ripe, little black-dotted beans, about three in a pod.

I can hardly clamber along the grape cliff now without getting my clothes covered with desmodium ticks, — there especially the *rotundifolium* and *paniculatum*. Though you were running for your life, they would have time to catch and cling to your clothes, — often

the whole row of pods of the *D. paniculatum*, like a piece of a saw blade with three teeth. You pause at a convenient place and spend a long time picking them off, which it took so short a time to attach. They will even cling to your hand as you go by. They cling like babes to the mother's breast, by instinct. Instead of being caught and detained ourselves by birdlime, we are compelled to catch these seeds and carry them with us. These almost invisible nets, as it were, are spread for us, and whole coveys of desmodium and bidens seeds and burs steal transportation out of us. I have found myself often covered, as it were with an imbricated scaly coat of the brown desmodium seeds or a bristling *chevaux-de-frise* of beggar-ticks, and had to spend a quarter of an hour or more picking them off at some convenient place; and so they got just what they wanted, deposited in another place. How surely the desmodium, growing on some rough cliff-side, or the bidens, on the edge of a pool, prophesy the coming of the traveller, brute or human, that will transport their seeds on his coat!

I am late for grapes; most have fallen. The fruit of what I have called *Vitis æstivalis* has partly fallen. It is dark-purple, about seven sixteenths of an inch in diameter, very acid and commonly hard. Stem and petiole smooth and purplish, but leaf not smooth or green beneath. Should not this be called frost grape, rather than the earlier one I ate at Brattleboro? Grapes are singularly various for a wild fruit, like many cultivated ones.

Dr. Reynolds told me the other day of a Canada

lynx (?) killed in Andover, in a swamp, some years ago, when he was teaching school in Tewksbury; thought to be one of a pair, the other being killed or seen in Derry. Its large track was seen in the snow in Tewksbury and traced to Andover and back. They saw where it had leaped thirty feet! and where it devoured rabbits. Was on a tree when shot. Skin stuffed somewhere.[1]

Sept. 30. Cattle-Show. An overcast, mizzling, and rainy day.

Minott tells of a General Hull, who lived somewhere in this county, who, he remembers, called out the whole division once or twice to a muster. He sold the army under him to the English in the last war, — though General Miller of Lincoln besought [him] to let him lead them, — and never was happy after it, had no peace of mind. It was said that his life was in danger here in consequence of his treason. Once, at a muster in front of the Hayden house, when there was a sham fight, and an Indian party took a circuit round a piece of wood, some put green grapes into their guns, and he, hearing one whistle by his head, thought some one wished to shoot him and ordered them to disperse, — dismissed them.

Speaking of the meadow-hay which is lost this year, Minott said that the little they had got since the last flood before this was good for nothing, would only poison the cattle, being covered with the dried slime and filth of the freshet. When you mowed it there

[1] *Vide* September, 1860.

arose a great dust. He spoke of this grass, thus left over winter to next year, as "old fog." Said that Clark (Daniel or Brooks) asked him the other day what made so many young alders and birches and willows spring up in the river meadows of late years; it did n't use to be so forty or fifty years ago; and he told him that in old times, when they were accustomed to take something strong to drink, they did n't stand for such shrubs but mowed all clear as they went, but now, not feeling so much energy for want of the stimulant, when they came to a bush, though no bigger than a pipe-stem, they mowed all round it and left it standing.

III

OCTOBER, 1856

(ÆT. 39)

Oct. 1. Very heavy rain in the night; cooler now. P. M. — To Walden.

Examined an *Asclepias Cornuti* pod, already opening by the wall. As they dry, the pods crack and open by the seam along the convex or outer side of the pods, revealing the seeds, with their silky parachutes, closely packed in an imbricated manner, already right side up to the number, in one instance, of one hundred and thirty-four (as I counted) and again two hundred and seventy. As they lie they resemble somewhat a round plump fish with the silk ends exposed at the tail. Children call them fishes. The silk is divided once or twice by their raised partitions of the spongy core around which they are arranged. At the top of some more open and drier, is already a little cloud of loosened seeds and down, two or three inches in diameter, held by the converging tips of the down like meridians, just ready to float away when the wind rises.

It is cooler and windier, and I wear two thin coats.

I do not perceive the poetic and dramatic capabilities of an anecdote or story which is told me, its significance, till some time afterwards. One of the qualities of a pregnant fact is that it does not surprise us, and we only perceive afterward how interesting it is, and

then must know all the particulars. We do not enjoy poetry fully unless we know it to be poetry.

Oct. 2. P. M. — To Cliffs *via* Hubbard's meadow.

Succory still, with its cool blue, here and there, and *Hieracium Canadense* still quite fresh, with its very pretty broad strap-shaped rays, broadest at the end, alternately long and short, with five very regular sharp teeth in the end of each. The scarlet leaves and stem of the rhexia, some time out of flower, makes almost as bright a patch in the meadow now as the flowers did, with its bristly leaves. Its seed-vessels are perfect little cream-pitchers of graceful form. The mountain sumach now a dark scarlet quite generally.

The prinos berries are in their prime, seven sixteenths of an inch in diameter. They are scarlet, somewhat lighter than the arum berries. They are now very fresh and bright, and what adds to their effect is the perfect freshness and greenness of the leaves amid which they are seen. *Gerardia purpurea* still. Brakes in Hubbard's Swamp Wood are withered, quite dry. *Solidago speciosa* completely out, though not a flower was out September 27th, or five days ago; say three or four days.

The river is still higher, owing to the rain of September 30th, partly covering the meadows; yet they are endeavoring to rake cranberries. After all, I perceive that *in some places* the greatest injury done by the water to these berries has probably been that it prevented their ripening, but generally it has been by

softening them. They carry them home, spread, and dry them, and pick out the spoilt ones. One gets only fifty bushels where he would have had two hundred. *Eupatorium purpureum* is generally done. Now and then I see a *Hypericum Canadense* flower still. The leaves, etc., of this and the *angulosum* are turned crimson.

I am amused to see four little Irish boys only five or six years old getting a horse in a pasture, for their father apparently, who is at work in a neighboring field. They have all in a row got hold of a very long halter and are leading him. All wish to have a hand in it. It is surprising that he obeys such small specimens of humanity, but he seems to be very docile, a real family horse. At length, by dint of pulling and shouting, they get him into a run down a hill, and though he moves very deliberately, scarcely faster than a walk, all but the one at the end of the line soon cut and run to right and left, without having looked behind, expecting him to be upon them. They haul up at last at the bars, which are down, and then the family puppy, a brown pointer (?), about two-thirds grown, comes bounding to join them and assist. He is as youthful and about as knowing as any of them. The horse marches gravely behind, obeying the faint tug at the halter, or honestly stands still from time to time, as if not aware that they are pulling at all, though they are all together straining every nerve to start him. It is interesting to behold this faithful beast, the oldest and wisest of the company, thus implicitly obeying the lead of the youngest and weakest.

The second lechea radical shoots are one inch long. *Solidago bicolor* considerably past prime. Corydalis still fresh.

Saw apparently two phœbes on the tops of the dry mulleins. Why so rarely seen for so many months?

Oct. 3. The white pines are now getting to be pretty generally parti-colored, the lower yellowing needles ready to fall. The sumachs are generally crimson (darker than scarlet), and young trees and bushes by the water and meadows are generally beginning to glow red and yellow. Especially the hillsides about Walden begin to wear these autumnal tints in the cooler air. These lit leaves, this glowing, bright-tinted shrubbery, is in singular harmony with the dry, stony shore of this cool and deep well.

The frost keeps off remarkably. I have seen none, though I hear that there was some two or three mornings ago.

I detect the crotalaria behind the Wyman site, by hearing the now rattling seeds in its pods as I go through the grass, like the trinkets about an Indian's leggins, or a rattlesnake.

Oct. 4. *Helianthus tuberosus*, apparently several days, in Reynolds's yard (the butcher's).

P. M. — Down river.

Wind from northeast. Some water milkweed flying. Its pods small, slender, straight, and pointed perfectly upright; seeds large with much wing. The hibiscus gone to seed, and pods opened showing the

seed, opposite Ostrya Island [1] or Rock below Battle-Ground.

In an article on the alligator in *Harper's Magazine* for December, 1854, it is said that mosquitoes "surround its head in clouds; and we have heard the negroes assert that the reptile opened its mouth until its interior was fully lined, and suddenly closing it up, would swallow the accumulated marauders, and then set its huge jaws as a trap for more." This reminds me of the swarms of mosquitoes about frogs and, I think, turtles.

In another article, of May, 1855, on "The Lion and his Kind," the animals are placed in this order: the domestic cat, wildcat, the ocelot or tiger-cat of Peru and Mexico, the caracal of Asia and Africa, the lynx of North America, the chetah of India and Africa, the ounce of India (perhaps a rough variety of the leopard), the leopard, the jaguar, the cougar, the tiger, the lion. "The Cougar is the American lion — at least it bears a closer resemblance to that noble brute than any other of the feline family, for it is destitute of the stripes of the tiger, the spots of the leopard, and the rosettes of the jaguar; but when full-grown possesses a tawny-red color, almost uniform over the whole body, and hence the inference that it is like the lion." "Cougar is a corruption of the Mexican name." Ranges between Paraguay and the Great Lakes of North America. "In form it is less attractive than the generality of its species, there being an apparent want of symmetry; for it is observable that

[1] Burr's Island.

its back is hollow, its legs short and thick, and its tail does not gracefully taper; yet nature has invested the cougar with other qualities as a compensation, the most remarkable of which is an apparent power to render itself quite invisible; for so cunningly tinged is its fur, that it perfectly mingles with the bark of trees — in fact, with all subdued tints — and stretched upon a limb, or even extended upon the floor of its dimly lighted cage, you must prepare your eye by considerable mental resolution to be assured of its positive presence." Its flesh is eaten by some. Mrs. Jane Swisshelm kept one which grew to be nine feet long, and, according to her, in this writer's words, "If in exceeding good-humor he would purr; but if he wished to intimidate, he would raise his back, erect his hair, and spit like a cat. In the twilight of the evening the animal was accustomed to pace back and forth to the full extent of his limits, ever and anon uttering a short, piercing shriek, which made the valley reverberate for half a mile or more in every direction. Mrs. Swisshelm says these sounds were the shrillest, and at the same time the most mournful she ever heard. They might, perhaps, be likened to the scream of a woman in an agony of terror." He once sprang at her, but was brought up by his chain. When preparing to spring, his eyes were "green and blazing, and the tip of his tail moving from side to side." This paper describes "a full-grown royal tiger, measuring four feet seven inches from the nose to the insertion of the tail. . . . Unlike the miserable wretches we see in our menageries, etc." The Brattleboro paper

makes the panther four feet eleven inches, so measured!!

I hear that a Captain Hurd, of Wayland or Sudbury, estimates the loss of river meadow-hay this season in those two towns on account of the freshet at twelve hundred tons.

Oct. 5. Sunday. P. M. — To Hill and over the pastures westward.

Sally Cummings and Mike Murray are out on the Hill collecting apples and nuts. Do they not rather belong to such children of nature than to those who have merely bought them with their money? There are few apples for them this year, however, and it is too early for walnuts (too late for hazelnuts). The grapes are generally gone, and their vines partly bare and yellowed, though without frost. I amuse myself on the hilltop with pulling to pieces and letting fly the now withered and dry pasture thistle tops. They have a much coarser pappus than the milkweeds. I am surprised, amid these perfectly withered and bleached thistles, to see one just freshly in flower. The autumnal dandelion is now comparatively scarce there. In the huckleberry pasture, by the fence of old barn boards, I notice many little pale-brown dome-

shaped (puckered to a centre beneath) puffballs, which emit their dust. When you pinch them, a smoke-like brown dust (snuff-colored) issues from the orifice at their top, just like smoke from a chimney. It is so fine and light that it rises into the air and is wafted away like smoke. They

are low Oriental domes or mosques. Sometimes crowded together in nests, like a collection of humble cottages on the moor, in the coal-pit or Numidian style; for there is suggested some humble hearth beneath, from which this smoke comes up, as it were the homes of slugs and crickets. They please me not a little by their resemblance to rude dome-shaped, turf-built cottages on the plain, wherein some humble but everlasting life is lived. Amid the low and withering grass or the stubble there they are gathered, and their smoke ascends between the legs of the herds and the traveller. I imagine a hearth and pot, and some snug but humble family passing its Sunday evening beneath each one. Some, when you press them harder, emit clear water — the relics of rain or dew — along with the dust, which last, however, has no affinity for it, but is quite dry and smoke-like. I locate there at once all that is simple and admirable in human life. There is no virtue which their roofs exclude. I imagine with what contentment and faith I could come home to them at evening.[1] I see some not yet ripe, still entire and rounded at top. When I break them

open, they are found to be quite soggy, of a stringy white consistency, almost cream-like, riper and yellowish at top, where they will burst by and by. Many have holes eaten into them. On one I find a slug feeding, with a little hole beneath him,[2] and a cricket has

[1] [Channing, p. 101.]

[2] This was a different species, the white pigeon-egg, with that rough, crystalled surface.

eaten out the whole inside of another in which he is housed. This before they are turned to dust. Large chocolate-colored ones have long since burst and are spread out wide like a shallow dish.

Crickets are seen now moving slowly about in the paths, often with their heads only concealed in a burrow, as if looking out for winter quarters. I saw, on my return, a dozen crickets of various sizes gathered on an apple paring which I had dropped in the path when I came along.

The sweet-briar rose hips are very handsome now, but these hips do not deserve to be coupled with haws as articles of food, even in extremities. They are very dry, hard, seedy, and unpalatable. I see some fresh-grown callitriche in some clear well-filled leafy pools which are commonly dry at this season. The singular long pointed reddish bulbs in the axils of the *Lysimachia stricta* are one of the signs of the season, cool and late.

It is well to find your employment and amusement in simple and homely things. These wear best and yield most. I think I would rather watch the motions of these cows in their pasture for a day, which I now see all headed one way and slowly advancing, — watch them and project their course carefully on a chart, and report all their behavior faithfully, — than wander to Europe or Asia and watch other motions there; for it is only ourselves that we report in either case, and perchance we shall report a more restless and worthless self in the latter case than in the first.

Oct. 6. I notice the effects of some frost this morning in garden. Some pumpkin vines drooping and black.

P. M. — Carried Sophia and Aunt up the Assabet.

The reflections of the bright-tinted maples very perfect. The common notes of the chickadee, so rarely heard for a long time, and also one *phebe* strain from it,[1] amid the Leaning Hemlocks, remind me of pleasant winter days, when they are more commonly seen. The jay's shrill note is more distinct of late about the edges of the woods, when so many birds have left us. Were suddenly driven home by a slight thunder-shower!

Oct. 8. P. M. — To Smith Chestnut Grove by Turnpike, and Saw Mill.

At length I discover some white pine cones, a few, on Emerson Heater Piece trees. They are all open, and the seeds, all the sound ones but one, gone. So September is the time to gather them. The tip of each scale is covered with fresh flowing pitch.

The trees and weeds by the Turnpike are all alive this pleasant afternoon with twittering sparrows, Emerson's buckthorn hedge especially, and Watts's weeds adjoining. I observe white-throated sparrows, song sparrows, I think some *Fringilla juncorum*, etc. (*maybe* tree sparrows ???). They are all together and keep up a faint warbling, apparently the white-throats and tree sparrows, — if the last are there. A song sparrow utters a full strain.

[1] This again the 8th. It is an anticipation of spring.

Asters and goldenrods are now scarce; no longer that crowd along the low roadsides.

The following is the condition of the asters and goldenrods, judging from my observations on this walk alone. I will only refer to those which were not done September 24th. I speak of their general condition, though a very few specimens here and there may present a different appearance.

Swamp *stricta*, done, some hoary.
S. nemoralis, done, many hoary, though a *very few* flowers linger.
S. altissima, done, many hoary,
S. puberula, not seen.
S. bicolor and variety, probably done (not seen out).
S. latifolia, far gone.
S. cæsia, much the worse for the wear, but freshest of any seen.
S. speciosa, not seen (it was in prime Oct. 2d).
Diplopappus cornifolius, not seen, probably done.
D. umbellatus, not seen, probably done.[1]
A. patens, apparently done.
A. macrophyllus, not seen.
A. acuminatus, not seen.
A. dumosus, probably done.
D. linariifolius, apparently nearly done.
A. undulatus, *comparatively* fresh.
A. corymbosus, looks fresh!
A. lævis, not noticed, probably done (?) *generally*.
A. Tradescanti, a few still.
A. puniceus, hardly seen, probably nearly done.
A. longifolius, a few still.
A. multiflorus, none observed.
A. miser, a very few left.

Of solidagos, I judge that only the last three named, and perhaps *puberula* and *S. bicolor* in some places,

[1] Certainly done the 14th.

are common still; and, of asters, only *corymbosus*, *undulatus*, *Tradescanti*, and *longifolius* (know not of *multiflorus*) are common.

The *Bidens cernuum* is quite common and fresh yet in Everett's meadow by Turnpike. A few chestnut burs are open, and have been some days, before they could have felt frost, showing that they would open without it, but a stone will not jar them down, nor a club thrown into the tree yet. I get half a pocketful out of slightly gaping burs at the expense of many prickles in my fingers. The squirrels have cut off some burs. I see the marks of their teeth. Find many checkerberries on Smith's hill beyond the chestnut grove, which appear to be just ripe, a lighter pink color, with two little white checks on the stem side, the marks of what I suppose are the two outer calyx-leaves. Near by, a short fertile fern with large shelly capsules, perhaps a botrychium.[1] A great deal, a great part, of the dicksonia fern at Saw Mill is now whitened or whitening. I see, as I go through the hollow behind Britton's shanty, the already hoary tops of many *S. nemoralis* and also the yellowish spheres of the *Hieracium scabrum* amid the scarlet (or crimson) sumach and reddened comptonia. So fast the winter advances. I notice a large toad amid the dead leaves in the woods at *Chimaphila maculata*, colored like the leaves, a much darker brown than usual, proving that they resemble the ground they occupy.

Meet Nealy, short and thick, in the woodland path, with his great silent mastiff by his side and his double-

[1] Yes, small botrychium. *Vide* 19th *inst.*

barrelled gun in his palm, all dangerously cocked. He is eager for partridges, but only guilty of killing a jay, I judge, from his report. Once or twice I hear the report of his fowling-piece. I heard partridges *drum* the 3d instant. Observed in the woods a very large, perhaps owl pellet, or possibly fox stercus, of gray fur and small bones and the jaw of a rodent, apparently a wild mouse.

The hickory leaves are among the handsomest now, varying from green through yellow, more or less broadly green-striped on the principal veins, to pure yellow, at first almost lemon-yellow, at last browner and crisped. This mingling of yellow and green on the same leaf, the green next the veins where the life is most persistent, is very pleasing.

Sophia brings home two or three clusters of very large freshly ripe thimble-berries, with some unripe, a second crop, apparently owing to the abundance of rain for the last six weeks.

Oct. 10. These are the finest days in the year, Indian summer. This afternoon it was 80°, between three and four, and at 6.30 this evening my chamber is oppressively sultry, and the thermometer on the north side of the house is at 64°. I lie with window wide open under *a single sheet* most of the night. But I anticipate. The *phebe* note of the chickadee is now often heard in the yards, and the very Indian summer itself is a similar renewal of the year, with the faint warbling of birds and second blossoming of flowers. Going to E. Hosmer's by boat, saw quite a flock of

wild ducks in front of his house, close by the bridge. While moving the fence to-day, dug up a large reddish, mummy-like chrysalid or nymph.[1]

Oct 11. P. M. — To Cliffs.

The Indian summer continues. Solidagos now generally show woolly heads along the fences and brooks.

E. Hosmer said yesterday that his father remembered when there was but one store in Concord, and that the little office attached to Dr. Heywood's house, kept by Beatton. I remember the old shutters with names of groceries on them.[2] Perhaps, then, Jones was the only shopkeeper in *his* day. I was speaking of it to Farrar, the blacksmith, to-day, and he said, yes, he had heard his father speak of Beatton as "the most honestest man that ever was." When a child was sent to his store and he could not make change within half a penny he would stick a row of pins in the child's sleeve, enough to make all square. He said he had only a keg of molasses and a bladder of snuff when he began. Farrar thought that the spirit manufactured a century ago was not so adulterated and poisonous as that now made. He could remember when delirium tremens was very rare. There was Luke Dodge; he could remember him a drunkard for more than forty years, yet he was now between eighty and ninety.

Farrar gave me a wing and foot of a hawk which he shot about three weeks ago as he was sitting on a woodpile by the railroad, against R. W. E.'s lot. He called

[1] That is, of the sphinx moth.

[2] No, it probably was not there.

it a partridge hawk; said he was about as big as a partridge and his back of a similar color, and had not a white rump. This foot has a sharp shin [1] and stout claws, but the wing is much larger than that of the *Falco fuscus* (or sharp-shinned hawk), being, with the shoulder attached, sixteen inches long, which would make the alar extent some thirty-three inches, which is the size of the *F. Pennsylvanicus*. This wing corresponds in its markings very exactly with the description of that, and I must so consider it. Peabody does not describe any such bird, and Nuttall describes it as very rare, — apparently he has not seen one, — and says that Wilson had seen only two.

Bay-wing sparrows numerous. In the woods I hear the note of the jay, a metallic, *clanging* sound, sometimes a mew. Refer any strange note to him. The scent of decaying leaves after the wet fall is a very agreeable fragrance on all sides in the woods now, like a garret full of herbs. In the path, as I go up the hill beyond the springs, on the edge of Stow's sprout-land, I find a little snake which somebody has killed with his heel. It is apparently *Coluber amœnus*, the red snake. Brown above, light-red beneath, about eight inches long, but the end of its tail is gone (only three quarters of an inch of it left). I count some one hundred and twenty-seven plates. It is a conspicuous light red beneath, then a bluish-gray line along the sides, and above this brown with a line of lighter or yellowish brown down the middle of the back.

The sprout-land and stubble behind the Cliffs are

[1] I had reference to the sharp angle of the *rear* edge of the shin.

all alive with restless flocks of sparrows of various species. I distinguish *F. hyemalis*, song sparrow, apparently *F. juncorum* or maybe tree sparrows,[1] and chip-birds (?). They are continually flitting past and surging upward, two or more in pursuit of each other, in the air, where they break like waves, and pass along with a faint cheep. On the least alarm many will rise from a juniper bush on to a shrub oak above it, and, when all is quiet, return into the juniper, perhaps for its berries. It is often hard to detect them as they sit on the young trees, now beginning to be bare, for they are very nearly the color of the bark and are very cunning to hide behind the leaves. There are apparently two other kinds, one like purple finches, another more like large Savannah sparrows.

The shrub oak plain is now in the perfection of its coloring, the red of young oaks with the green of spiring birches intermixed. A rich rug.

It is perfect Indian summer, a thick haze forming wreaths in the near horizon. The sun is almost shorn of its rays now at mid-afternoon, and there is only a sheeny reflection from the river.

The patches of huckleberries on Conantum are now red. Here on the Cliffs are fresh poke flowers and small snapdragon and corydalis. The white goldenrod is still common here, and covered with bees. *Hieracium venosum* still. I see pretty dense spreading radical leaves about the pinweeds, apparently recent.

A cuckoo is heard.

I find that the rough, white, crystalled-surfaced

[1] Probably not.

pigeon-egg fungus (one was noticed in report of October 5th) are puffballs. The outer thick white coat peels off first. I see it so now, but not in segments like the *stellata*.

A pasture thistle with many fresh flowers and bees on it.

Oct. 12. It is interesting to see how some of the few flowers which still linger are frequented by bees and other insects. Their resources begin to fail and they are improving their last chance. I have noticed them of late, especially on white goldenrod and pasture thistles, etc.; and to-day, on a small watermelon cut open ten days ago, in the garden, I see half a dozen honey-bees, many more flies, some wasps, a grasshopper, and a *large* handsome butterfly, with dark snuff-colored wings and a stripe of blue eyes on them. The restless bees keep buzzing toward the butterfly, but it keeps them off by opening and shutting its wings, but does not much mind the other insects. I did not suspect such a congregation in the desolate garden.

Wasps for some time looking about for winter quarters.

Oct. 14. A sudden change in the weather after remarkably warm and pleasant weather. Rained in the night, and finger-cold to-day. Your hands instinctively find their way to your pockets. Leaves are fast falling, and they are already past their brightness, perhaps earlier than usual[1] on account of wet.

[1] No.

P. M. — To Hubbard's Close.

Huckleberries perfectly plump and fresh on the often bare bushes (always (else) red-leaved). The bare gray twigs begin to show, the leaves fast falling. The maples are nearly bare. The leaves of red maples, still bright, strew the ground, often crimson-spotted on a yellow ground, just like some apples.[1] Pine-needles, just fallen, now make a thick carpet.

Going to Laurel Glen in the hollow beyond Deep Cut Woods, I see now withered erechthites and epilobium standing thick on the bare hillside, where the hemlocks were cut, exposing the earth, though no fire has been there. They seem to require only that the earth shall be laid bare for them.

In Laurel Glen, an aspen sprout which has grown seven to eight feet high, its lower and larger leaves, already fallen and blackened (a dark slate), about. One green and perfect leaf measures ten inches in length and nine broad, heart-shaped. Others, less perfect, are half an inch or more larger each way.

Any flowers seen now may be called late ones. I see perfectly fresh succory, not to speak of yarrow, a *Viola ovata*, some *Polygala sanguinea*, autumnal dandelion, tansy, etc., etc.

Oct. 15. P. M. — Up Assabet.

A smart frost, which even injured plants in house. Ground stiffened in morning; ice seen.

River lower than for some months. Banks begin to wear almost a Novemberish aspect. The black willow

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 265; Riv. 325.]

almost completely bare; many quite so. It loses its leaves about same time with the maples. The large ferns are now rapidly losing their leaves except the terminal tuft. Other species about the edges of swamps were turned suddenly dark cinnamon-color by the frost of yesterday. The water is very calm and full of reflections. Large fleets of maple and other leaves are floating on its surface as I go up the Assabet, leaves which apparently came down in a shower with yesterday morning's frost. Every motion of the turtles is betrayed by their rustling now.[1] Mikania is all whitish woolly now. Yet many tortoises are still out in the sun. An abundance of checkerberries by the hemlock at V. Muhlenbergii Brook. A remarkable year for berries. Even this, too, is abundant like the rest. They are tender and more palatable than ever now. I find a little pile of them, maybe fifteen or twenty, on the moss with each a little indentation or two on it, made apparently by some bird or beast. The chickadees are hopping near on the hemlock above. They resume their winter ways before the winter comes. A great part of the hemlock seeds fallen.

Oct. 16. Ground all white with frost.

P. M. — To chestnuts, down Turnpike.

I notice these flowers on the way by the roadside, which survive the frost, *i. e.* a few of them: hedge-mustard, mayweed, tall crowfoot, autumnal dandelion, yarrow, some *Aster Tradescanti*, and some red clover.[2]

[1] [*Excursions*, pp. 266, 267; Riv. 327.]

[2] Catnep. Tansy next day, and a very few meagre *S. cæsia* and

Polygonum orientale was finished by yesterday's frost. There was plenty of the front-rank polygonum freshly open along river on the 13th. Perhaps the frosts have nipped it.

I saw a farmer busily collecting his pumpkins on the 14th, — Abel Brooks, — rambling over his corn-fields and bringing the pumpkins out to the sides on the path, on the side of the field, where he can load them. The ground was so stiff on the 15th, in the morning, that some could not dig potatoes. Bent is now making haste to gather his apples. I. Wright, too, is collecting some choice barrels of golden russets. Many times he turns it over before he leaves out a specked one. A poor story if the farmer cannot get rich, for everything he has is salable, even every load of mud on his farm.

At the Everett meadow a large flock of mewing and lisping goldfinches, with but little yellow, pass over the Turnpike.

Many chestnut burs are now open, yet a stone will not jar down many nuts yet. Burs which were quite green on the 8th are now all brown and dry, and the prickles come off in your hand when you touch them, yet the nuts do not readily drop out. Many nuts have fallen within two or three days, but many squirrels have been busily picking them up.

Found amid the sphagnum on the dry bank on the south side of the Turnpike, just below Everett's meadow, a rare and remarkable fungus, such as I have heard of but never seen before. The whole height six and

A. undulatus, and, on the 19th, snapdragon, *Ranunculus bulbosus*, shepherd's-purse, and chickweed, of course.

three quarters inches, two thirds of it being buried in the sphagnum. It may be divided into three parts, pileus, stem, and base, — or scrotum, for it is a perfect phallus. One of those fungi named *impudicus*, I think.[1] In all respects a most disgusting object, yet very suggestive. It is hollow from top to bottom, the form of the hollow answering to that of the outside. The color of the outside white excepting the pileus, which is olive-colored and somewhat coarsely corrugated, with an oblong mouth at tip about one eighth of an inch long, or, measuring the white lips, half an inch. This cap is thin and white within, about one and three eighths inches high by one and a half wide. The stem (bare portion) is three inches long (tapering more rapidly than in the drawing), horizontally viewed of an oval form. Longest diameter at base one and a half inches, at top (on edge of pileus) fifteen sixteenths of an inch. Short diameters in both cases about two thirds as much. It is a delicate white cylinder of a finely honeycombed and crispy material about three sixteenths of an inch thick, or more, the whole very straight and regular. The base, or scrotum, is of an irregular bag form, about one inch by two in the extremes, consisting of a thick trembling gelatinous mass surrounding the bottom of the stem and covered with a tough white skin of a darker tint than the stem. The whole plant rather frail and trembling. There was at first a very thin delicate white collar (or *volva?*) about the base of the stem above the scrotum.

[1] This is very similar to if not the same with that represented in Loudon's *Encyclopædia* and called "*Phallus impudicus*, Stinking Morel, very fetid."

It was as offensive to the eye as to the scent, the cap rapidly melting and defiling what it touched with a fetid, olivaceous, semiliquid matter. In an hour or two the plant scented the whole house wherever placed, so that it could not be endured. I was afraid to sleep in my chamber where it had lain until the room had been well ventilated. It smelled like a dead rat in the ceiling, in all the ceilings of the house. Pray, what was Nature thinking of when she made this? She almost puts herself on a level with those who draw in privies. The cap had at first a smooth and almost dry surface, of a sort of olive slate-color, but the next day this colored surface all melted out, leaving deep corrugations or gills — rather honeycomb-like cells — with a white bottom.

Oct. 17. Noticed some of the fungus called spunk, very large, on the large white oak in Love Lane, eight or nine feet from the ground on the east side, on a protuberance where a limb was formerly cut off. It is now green and moist, of a yellowish color, composed of several flakes one above the other; the length of the shelf, or chord of the arc, twenty-one inches; depth from the tree, or width of shelf, about one foot.

Frost has now within three or four days turned almost all flowers to woolly heads, — their November aspect. Fuzzy, woolly heads now reign along all hedgerows and over many broad fields.

Some trees, as small hickories, appear to have dropped their leaves instantaneously, as at a signal, as a soldier grounds arms. The ground under such reflects a blaze

of light from now crisped yellow leaves.[1] Down they have come on all sides, as if touched by fairy fingers. Boys are raking leaves in the street, if only for the pleasure of dealing with such clean, crisp substances.[2] Countless leafy skiffs are floating on pools and lakes and rivers and in the swamps and meadows, often concealing the water quite from foot and eye. Each leaf, still crisply curled up on its edges, makes as yet a tight boat like the Indian's hide one, but ere long it will become relaxed and flatted out and sink to the bottom, *i. e.* if it is driven out to sea, but most are drifted toward the shore, which is converted into one long, crowded haven where the water is concealed, and they settle close to land.[3]

Many fringed gentians quite fresh yet, though most are faded and withered. I suspect that their very early and sudden fading and withering has nothing, or little, to do with frost after all, for why should so many fresh ones succeed still? My pressed ones have all faded in like manner!!

It would be too late to look for bees now at Wyman's; the flowers are too far gone.

I go down the path through Charles Bartlett's land. The young white oak leaves are now generally withered in and on the sides of the hollows there, also the black scrub, while the red and black oaks are still commonly red and so far alive.

As I stood looking at Emerson's bound under the

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 264; Riv. 324.]
[2] [*Excursions*, p. 266; Riv. 326.]
[3] [See *Excursions*, pp. 266–268; Riv. 326–328.]

railroad embankment, I heard a smart *tche-day-day-day* close to my ear, and, looking up, saw four of these birds, which had come to scrape acquaintance with me, hopping amid the alders within three and four feet of me. I had heard them further off at first, and they had followed me along the hedge. They *day-day*'d and lisped their faint notes alternately, and then, as if to make me think they had some other errand than to peer at me, they pecked the dead twigs with their bills — the little top-heavy, black-crowned, volatile fellows.

Oct. 18. Rain all night and half this day.

P. M. — A-chestnutting down Turnpike and across to Britton's, thinking that the rain now added to the frosts would relax the burs which were open and let the nuts drop.

The sugar maples are now in their glory, all aglow with yellow, red, and green. They are remarkable for the contrast they afford of deep blushing red on one half and green on the other.[1]

The chestnuts are not so ready to fall as I expected. Perhaps the burs require to be dried now after the rain. In a day or two they will nearly all come down. They are a pretty fruit, thus compactly stowed away in this bristly chest, — three is the regular number, and there is no room to spare, — the two outside nuts having each one convex side without and a flat side within; the middle nut has two flat sides. Sometimes there are several more nuts in a bur, but this year the burs are small, and there are not commonly more

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 271; Riv. 332.]

than two good nuts, very often only one, the middle one, both sides of which will then be convex, each way bulging out into a thin abortive mere reminiscence of a nut, all shell, beyond it. It is a rich sight, that of a large chestnut tree with a dome-shaped top, where the yellowing leaves have become thin, — for most now strew the ground evenly as a carpet throughout the chestnut woods and so save some seed, — all richly rough with great brown burs, which are opened into several segments so as to show the wholesome-colored nuts peeping forth, ready to fall on the slightest jar. The individual nuts are very interesting, of various forms, according to the season and the number in a bur. The base of each where it was joined to the bur is marked with an irregular dark figure on a light ground, oblong or crescent-shaped commonly, like a spider or other insect with a dozen legs, while the upper or small end tapers into a little white, woolly spire crowned with a star, and the whole upper slopes of the nuts are covered with the same hoary wool, which reminds you of the frosts on whose advent they peep forth. Each nut stretches forth a little starry hand at the end of a slender arm — and by this, when mature, you may pull it out without fear of prickles. Within this thick prickly bur the nuts are about as safe until they are quite mature, as a porcupine behind its spines. Yet I see where the squirrels have gnawed through many closed burs and left the pieces on the stumps.

The late goldenrod (*S. latifolia*) is all gone, on account of frost.

Men commonly exaggerate the theme. Some themes they think are significant and others insignificant. I feel that my life is very homely, my pleasures very cheap. Joy and sorrow, success and failure, grandeur and meanness, and indeed most words in the English language do not mean for me what they do for my neighbors. I see that my neighbors look with compassion on me, that they think it is a mean and unfortunate destiny which makes me to walk in these fields and woods so much and sail on this river alone. But so long as I find here the only real elysium, I cannot hesitate in my choice. My work is writing, and I do not hesitate, though I know that no subject is too trivial for me, tried by ordinary standards; for, ye fools, the theme is nothing, the life is everything. All that interests the reader is the depth and intensity of the life excited. We touch our subject but by a point which has no breadth, but the pyramid of our experience, or our interest in it, rests on us by a broader or narrower base. That is, man is all in all, Nature nothing, but as she draws him out and reflects him. Give me simple, cheap, and homely themes.[1]

I forgot to say that there are sometimes two meats within one chestnut shell, divided transversely, and each covered by its separate brown-ribbed skin.[2]

I still see a yellow butterfly occasionally zigzagging by the roadside.

What a strong medicinal but rich scent now after the

[1] [Channing, p. 83.]

[2] As if Nature had smuggled the seed of one more tree into this chest.

rain, from decaying weeds, perhaps ferns, by the roadside! The rain, falling on the fresh dried herbs and filling the ditches into which they drooped, has converted them into tea.[1]

Apple leaves are now pretty generally brown and crisp.

I see where the chestnut trees have been sadly bruised by the large stones cast against them in previous years and which still lie around.

That was an interesting sight described on the 12th, the winged insects of various kinds gathered on the last fragment of a watermelon in the garden, to taste the last sweets of the year. In midsummer they are dispersed and not observed, but now, as in the spring, they are congregated about the little sweet that is left.

Minott told me one of his hunting stories yesterday, how he saw a very large hen-hawk come sailing from over the hill, just this side of where Moore lives now. He did n't expect to reach her, but he knew that he had a plaguy smart little piece, — it was a kind of half-stocked one (he always speaks of the gun he used on a particular occasion as if it were a new one, describing it minutely, though he never had more than three, perhaps not more than two, in his life, I suspect), — so he thought he 'd give her a try, and, faith, she pitched down into the little meadow on the north side the road there, and when he came up she bristled up to him so that he was obliged to give her another charge.

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 268; Riv. 329.]

Oct. 19. P. M. — To Conantum.

The fall, now and for some weeks, is the time for flocks of sparrows of various kinds flitting from bush to bush and tree to tree — and both bushes and trees are thinly leaved or bare — and from one seared meadow to another. They are mingled together, and their notes, even, being faint, are, as well as their colors and motions, much alike. The sparrow youth are on the wing. They are still further concealed by their resemblance in color to the gray twigs and stems, which are now beginning to be bare. I have not noticed any kind of blackbird for a long time.

The most prominent of the few lingering solidagos which I have noticed since the 8th is the *S. cæsia*, though that is very scarce indeed now, hardly survives at all. Of the asters which I have noticed since that date, the *A. undulatus* is, perhaps, the only one of which you can find a respectable specimen. I see one so fresh that there is a bumblebee on it. Of lingering flowers which I have noticed during the last three or four days (*vide* list under 16th), not including fringed gentian and witch-hazel, the freshest, and at same time commonest, is the yarrow.

I noticed, two or three days ago, after one of those frosty mornings, half an hour before sunset of a clear and pleasant day, a swarm, — were they not of winter gnats? — between me and the sun like so many motes, seven or eight feet from the ground, by the side of a young cherry tree in the yard. The swarm was some three feet in diameter and seemed to have been revealed by the level rays of the sun. Each insect was acting

its part in a ceaseless dance, rising and falling a few inches while the swarm kept its place. Is not this a forerunner of winter?

I go across Hubbard's land and find that I must go round the corners of two or three new winter-rye fields, which show very green by contrast with the seared grass. I sit on the old Conantum door-step, where the wind rattles the loose clapboards above my head, though for the most part only the horizontal rows of wrought nails are left to show where the clapboards have been. It is affecting to behold a peach and apple orchard just come to maturity by the side of this house, which was planted since this house was an uninhabited ruin, as if the first step would have been to pull down the house.

See quite a flock of myrtle-birds, — which I might carelessly have mistaken for slate-colored snowbirds, — flitting about on the rocky hillside under Conantum Cliff. They show about three white or light-colored spots when they fly, *commonly* no bright yellow, though some are pretty bright. They perch on the side of the dead mulleins, on rocks, on the ground, and directly dart off apparently in pursuit of some insect. I hear no note from them. They are thus near or on the ground, then, not as in spring.

Both the white and black ash are quite bare, and some of the elms there. The bass has lost, apparently, more than half its leaves.

The *Botrychium lunarioides*, now shedding its pale whitish dust when struck by the foot, but apparently *generally* a little past its maturity, is quite common

in the pasture near the wall where I sat to watch the eagle. At first you notice only the stipe, four to seven or eight inches high, like a narrow hand partly closed, for the small (now dull-purplish) frond unites with it below the surface.

Walking through the reddened huckleberry bushes, whose leaves are fast falling, I notice the birds' nests already filling with withered leaves.

Witch-hazel is in prime, or probably a little past, though some buds are not yet open. Their leaves are all gone. They form large clumps on the hillside there, even thirty to fifty stems from one to two or three inches in diameter and the highest twelve feet high, falling over on every side. The now imbrowned ferns around indicate the moist soil which they like.

I have often noticed the inquisitiveness of birds, as the other day of a sparrow, whose motions I should not have supposed to have any reference to me, if I had not watched it from first to last. I stood on the edge of a pine and birch wood. It flitted from seven or eight rods distant to a pine within a rod of me, where it hopped about stealthily and chirped awhile, then flew as many rods the other side and hopped about there a spell, then back to the pine again, as near me as it dared, and again to its first position, very restless all the while. Generally I should have supposed that there was more than one bird, or that it was altogether accidental, — that the chipping of this sparrow eight or ten rods [away] had no reference to me, — for I could see nothing peculiar about it. But when I brought my glass to bear on it, I found that

it was almost steadily eying me and was all alive with excitement.

Pokeweed has been killed by the severe frosts of the last three or four days.

The *Asclepias Cornuti* pods are now apparently in the midst of discounting. They point at various angles with the stem like a flourish. The pretty brown fishes have loosened and lifted their scales somewhat, are bristling a little. Or, further advanced, the outer part of the down of the upper seeds is blown loose, while they are still retained by the ends of the middle portion in loops attached to the core. These white tufts, ready to burst and take to flight on the least jar, show afar as big as your fist. There they dangle and flutter, till they are quite dry and the wind rises. Others again are open and empty, except of the brown core, and you see what a delicate smooth white (slightly cream-colored) lining this casket has.

The hypericums — the whole plant — have now generally been killed by the frost. A large pasture thistle bud close to the ground amid its leaves, as in spring.

Among the dirty woolly heads of plants now gone to seed, I notice for the first time the peculiar matted, woolly top of the tall anemone, rising above some red-leaved huckleberries. I am surprised to see to what length and breadth one of these little compact conical heads has puffed out. Here are five which have flown

and matted together into a mass four or five inches long, perpendicularly, by two wide, full of seeds with their wool.

I return by the west side of Lee's Cliff hill, and sit on a rounded rock there, covered with fresh-fallen pine-needles, amid the woods, whence I see Wachusett. How little unevenness and elevation is required for Nature's effects! An elevation one thousand or fifteen hundred feet above the plain is seen from all eminences and level open plains, as from over the opening made by a pond, within thirty miles. Nature is not obliged to lift her mountains very high in the horizon, after all, to make them visible and interesting.

The rich sunny yellow of the old pitch pine needles, just ready to fall, contrasting with the new and unmixed masses above, makes a very pleasing impression, as I look down into the hollows this side of Lee's Cliff.

I noticed the small woodpecker several days ago.

Oct. 20. P. M. — To Hill, to look for ground squirrel nests.

The river-banks have now assumed almost their November aspect. The button-bushes are nearly bare. The water is smooth, the sun warm, and the reflections particularly fine and distinct; but there are reflected now, for the most part, only gray twigs and a few sere and curled brown leaves, wool-grass, etc. Land at Hemlocks, in the eddy there, where the white bits of sawdust keep boiling up and down and whirling round as in a pot.

Amid the young pitch pines in the pasture behind I notice, as elsewhere of late, a great many brownish-yellow (and some pink) election-cake fungi,

eaten by crickets; about three inches in diameter. Some of those spread chocolate-colored ones have many grubs in them, though dry and dusty. Think I heard the very faint *gnah* of a nuthatch. Thus, of late, when the season is declining, many birds have departed, and our thoughts are turned towards winter (began to have a fire, more or less, say ten days or a fortnight ago), we hear the jay again more frequently, and the chickadees are more numerous and lively and familiar and utter their *phebe* note, and the nuthatch is heard again, and the small woodpecker seen amid the bare twigs.

Owing to the great height of the river, there has been no *Bidens Beckii* nor *Polygonum amphibium* to my knowledge this year, nor have I found any myriophyllum.

I dig into two or three squirrel-holes under a black oak, and in a rotten stump trace them a foot or more and lose them, or else they come to an end? Though I saw a squirrel enter the ground, I dug and lost it. They are apparently very busy now laying up their stores. I see a gray one making haste with waving tail across the field from the nut trees to the woods.

Looking up the side of the hill toward the sun, I see a little gossamer on the sweet-fern, etc.; and, from my boat, little flocks of white gossamer occasionally, three quarters of an inch long, in the air or caught on twigs, as if where a spider had hauled in his line. I

think that all spiders can walk on water, for when, last summer, I knocked one off my boat by chance, he ran swiftly back to the boat and climbed up, as if more to avoid the fishes than the water. This would account for those long lines stretched low over the water from one grass stem to another. I see one of them now five or six feet long and only three or four inches above the surface, and it is remarkable that there is no perceptible sag to it, weak as the line must be. The pinweeds are now bare, and their stem and fruit turned a dark brown. The thorns on the hill are all bare.

There are fewer turtles, now and for some time, out sunning. A very little *Solidago nemoralis* in one place from the axil.

I hear from my chamber the note of myrtle-birds [1] mingled with sparrows, in the yard, especially in the morning, quite like a clear, *sweet* squeaking wheelbarrow.

Oct. 21. A *very* warm Indian-summer day, too warm for a thick coat. It is remarkably hazy, too, but when I open the door I smell smoke, which may in part account for it. After being out awhile I do not perceive the smoke, only on first opening the door. It is so thick a blue haze that, when, going along in Thrush Alley Path, I look through the trees into Abel Brooks's deep hollow, I cannot see across it to the woods beyond, though it is only a stone's throw. Like a deep blue lake at first glance.

Had a chat with Minott, sitting on a log by his

[1] White-throat sparrow.

door. He says he began to carry a gun when he was fifteen or sixteen years old; afterward he owned three at one time, one training-piece and two fowling-pieces. He lived at James Baker's seven years; not till after he was of age. He used to range all over that neighborhood, away down into Lexington, and knew every stone and stump; used to go chestnutting about Flint's Pond, and a-fishing there, too. The fish and fowl were ten times as plenty as they are now. Why, he has been along the ridges (the moraines toward Ditch Pond) when, the ducks rising up on each side, the sky was black with them. His training-piece was an old king's-arm, taken from the British some time, he supposed. It was a capital piece, even for shot, and thoroughly made, made upon honor every part of it. There are no such guns made in this country. The lock was strong and smart, so that when you snapped it, it filled the pan chock-full of fire, and he could burn a single kernel of powder in it. But it took a good deal of powder to load it. He kept its brass mountings burnished so bright that you could see your face in them. He had also owned a French piece. Once, too, he had a little English cocking-piece, *i. e.* fowling-piece. It had the word "London" on the barrel close to the lock. It was a plaguy smart piece, bell-muzzled, and would carry ball well. He could knock over a robin with it eight rods off with ball or a slug. He had a rifle once. What did they use rifles for? Oh, for turkey-shooting.

Once, one Rice, who lived in Lincoln where Hayden does now, made a turkey-shooting, and he went to it

with his English fowling-piece. He saw many on the road going to it. Saw Dakin [and] Jonas Minott (Captain Minott's son, who spent quite a fortune on shooting), one offering to take another down to the shooting for a mug of flip. They asked him what he was going to do with that little thing. You paid fourpence a shot at a live turkey only twenty rods off. Those who had rifles were not allowed to rest. Amos Baker was there (who was at Concord Fight). The turkey was a large white one. Minott rammed down his slug and, getting down behind a fence, rested on it while the rest laughed at him. He told Amos to look sharp and tell him where his ball struck, and fired. Amos said the ball struck just above the turkey. Others were firing in the meanwhile. Minott loaded and tried once more, and this time his ball cut off the turkey's neck, and it was his; worth a dollar, at least. You only had to draw blood to get the turkey. Another, a black one, was set up, and this time his ball struck the ground just this side the turkey, then scaled up and passed right through its body, lodging under the skin on the opposite side, and he cut it out.

Rice made his money chiefly by his liquor, etc. Some set up the turkeys they had gained: others "hustled" for liquor or for a supper; *i. e.*, they would take sides and then, putting seven coppers in a hat, shake them up well and empty them, and the party that got the fewest heads after three casts paid for the supper.

M. says that, in all the time he lived at Baker's, in fact in all his life, he never went to market.

Told me how they used to carry on, on Concord Common formerly, on great days. Once, when they were shaking dice there in the evening for money, round a table with twenty-five or thirty dollars in cash upon it, some rogue fastened a rope to one leg of the table, and so at a distance suddenly started off with the table, at the same time upsetting and extinguishing the light. This made a great outcry. They ran up crying, "Mister, I'll help you pick up your money," but they put the half into their own pockets.

Father told me about his father the other night, — that he remembers his father used to breakfast before the family at one time, on account of his business, and he with him. His father used to eat the under crusts of biscuits, and he the upper. His father died in 1801, aged forty-seven. When the war came on, he was apprentice or journeyman to a cooper who employed many hands. He called them together, and told them that on account of the war his business was ruined and he had no more work for them. So, my father thinks, his father went privateering. Yet he remembers his telling him of his being employed digging at some defenses, when a cannon-ball came and sprinkled the sand all over them.

After the war he went into business as a merchant, commencing with a single hogshead of sugar. His shop was on Long Wharf. He was a short man, a little taller than my father, stout and very strong for his size. Levi Melchier [?], a powerful man, who was his clerk or tender, used to tell my father that he did not believe he was so strong a man as his father was.

He would never give in to him in handling a hogshead of molasses, — setting it on its head, or the like.

Minott, too, sings the praises of Beatton, the storekeeper, though of course he does not remember him. He was a Scotchman and a peddler, and the most honest man that is mentioned in Concord history. You might send a child to the store, and if there was a fraction still due the child after making change, he would give him a needle or a large pin.

Oct. 24. *Friday.* 12 M. — Set out for Eagleswood, Perth Amboy, N. J.

Spent the afternoon in Worcester.

By cars in evening to Allyn's Point and Steamer Commonwealth to New York.

Oct. 25. Saw, at Barnum's Museum, the stuffed skin of a cougar that was found floating dead in the Hudson many years ago. The stuffed jaguar there looks rather the largest. Had seen a clergyman in Worcester the previous afternoon (at Higginson's) who told me of one killed near the head of the Delaware, in New York State, by an acquaintance of his. His dog had treed it or found it on a tree on a mountainside, and the hunter first saw it as he came up from below, stretched out on a limb and looking intently at him, ready to spring. He fired and wounded it, but, as usual, it sprang as soon as struck, in the direction it was pointing. It struck seventy feet down the mountain from the tree, or a hundred feet distant, tearing off the sleeve of the hunter's very thick and

stout coat, as it passed, and marking his arm from shoulder to hand. It took to a tree, and again, and this time approaching it from above, he shot it. The specimens I have seen were long-bodied. Looked into De Kay's Report at the Astor Library. He describes one, the largest "of which we have any account," killed in Lake Fourth, Herkimer County. "It had a total length of 11 feet 3 inches." He says that Vanderdonk speaks of lions and their skins, only the latter seen by Christians, meaning panthers. According to D., haunts ledges of rocks called "panther ledges." There is no well-authenticated account of their having attacked a man, and it is not well established that the northern and southern species are the same.[1]

De Kay describes the *Sorex Dekayi*, "nearly allied to *brevicaudus*, but is larger and more robust in its form." From Massachusetts to Virginia. "Cheek teeth $\frac{1}{1}\frac{6}{0}$," instead of $\frac{1}{1}\frac{8}{0}$ in *S. brevicaudus*. The color resembles the fur of the star-nosed mole. Length of head and body, 4.8 inches; tail, .8; to end of hairs, .9. He never met with *S. brevicaudus* in New York. Is not this my sorex of July 12th, 1856? Or is mine possibly the *Sorex Fosteri*, whose cheek teeth are $\frac{1}{1}\frac{8}{0}$; and total length, 4; tail, 1.5.

Arrived at Eagleswood, Perth Amboy, Saturday, 5 P. M., October 25th.[2]

[1] Apparently a panther was killed after this, this fall in Rhode Island.

[2] [Concerning this visit, its object, and the interesting people with whom it made Thoreau acquainted, see *Familiar Letters*, pp. 283, 286–291; Riv. 333–341.]

Oct. 26. *Sunday.* An abundance of a viburnum, making thickets in dry woods and ravines and set out about houses, now full of edible fruit like that of *V. nudum*, and also of leaves. At first I was inclined to call it *V. nudum*, but beside that it bears an abundance of berries still, long after the *V. nudum* berries have fallen with us (and they hold on for three or four weeks afterward at least), it grows generally in dry woods and ravines and uplands; the leaf is quite thin, now reddened, of various forms; and the bush is quite thorny (!), in the woods making almost impenetrable thickets in many places, like a thorn bush, and gave me much trouble to cut through in surveying, as did the cat-briar. I think it must be the *V. prunifolium*, or black haw. It is quite ornamental, with its abundance of purple fruit, which tastes much like dates. I think I have never seen it in Concord, and perhaps Emerson and others confounded it with *V. nudum*. It is thorny like a wild apple, but of course much more slender. The privet was a very common shrub, with its black berries.

Flowers almost entirely done. See apparently the seaside goldenrod, lingering still by the Raritan River, and a new aster.

The persimmon (*Diospyros Virginiana*) quite common. Saw some trees quite full of fruit. There was a little left on the trees when I left, November 24th, but I should think it was in its prime about the end of the first week of November, *i. e.*, what would readily shake off. Before, it was commonly puckery. In any case it furs the mouth just like the choke-cherry. It

is not good for much. They would be more edible if it were not for the numerous large seeds, and when you have rejected them there is little but skin left. Yet I was surprised that the fruit was not more generally gathered.

The sassafras was common.

Saw and heard a katydid about the 1st of November.

Oct. 27. Monday. Began to survey along the shore and through the woods. One of the largest and commonest trees, the tulip, in the moist ravines; its dried tulip-shaped relic of a flower, the broad flat stamens still remaining. Noticed a medicinal odor, somewhat like fever-bush, in the bark of twigs. It is said to be a valuable tonic.

The liquidambar or sweet-gum trees, very common and large, oak-like. The corky bark on young trees and twigs was raised into two ears, so as to form a channel, which would conduct the rain down the branches to the main stem, I should say. The fruit was a coarse, rigid, spherical bur, an inch or more in diameter, which opened and dropped much fine seed in my trunk.

Black walnut and bayberry were pretty common, though I noticed no berries on the last.

IV

NOVEMBER, 1856

(ÆT. 39)

Nov. 2. *Sunday.* Took a walk two miles west of Eagleswood. The *Quercus palustris*, or pin oak, very common there, much like the scarlet oak. Name said to be derived from the dead stub ends of branches on the trunk beneath, like pins or treenails. Its acorns subglobose, and marked with meridional lines. A mile and a half west of Spring's, a new oak, with narrow and entire willow-like leaves, apparently *Q. imbricaria*, laurel or shingle oak, or perhaps Michaux's *Q. cinerea*, which may be a variety of it. According to Michaux's plates, I see that the leaves of the *Q. Phellos*, or willow oak, are about two and three quarters by one third plus inches, of the laurel oak three and a half by seven eighths. *His* upland willow oak (*Q. cinerea*) leaf is about three by three quarters and less tapering at base.

The *Cornus florida* was exceedingly common and large there. Conspicuous with its scarlet berries, fed on by robins. The leaves were turned a brown scarlet or orange red.

About the 10th of November, I first noticed long bunches of very small dark-purple or black grapes fallen on the dry leaves in the ravine east of Spring's

house. Quite a large mass of clusters remained hanging on the leafless vine, thirty feet overhead there, till I left, on the 24th November. These grapes were much shrivelled, but they had a very agreeably spicy acid taste, evidently not acquired till after the frosts. I thought them quite a discovery and ate many from day to day, swallowing the skins and stones, and recommended them to Spring. He said that they were very much like a certain French grape, which he had eaten in France. It is a true frost grape, but apparently answers to *Vitis æstivalis* (?). *Vide* fruit and leaves. One I opened has only two seeds, while *one* of the early ones at Brattleboro has four, but one of the late ones of Brattleboro has only two, which also I have called *V. æstivalis*.

Was interested by Pierce's Perpetual Calendar on a round stick (sometimes on a pencil-case), by which you tell the day of the week, etc., for any date.

Visited the principal antique bookstore, in Fulton Street, upstairs, west of Broadway; also Tunison's antique bookstore, 138 Fulton Street.

May be worth while to get Oswald's Etymological Dictionary and, if possible, Smith's (smaller) (abridged) Dictionary of Antiquities. He is the author of the Latin Dictionary.

I suspect it is the *Quercus montana*, var. *monticola* of *Prinus*, so common at Eagleswood, with its large acorns now sprouted. Indeed, almost every acorn of white and chestnut oaks was sprouted.

Noticed plenty of *Chimaphila maculata* in the great ravine.

Saw more rabbits and wild mice there than here.

Game is protected. The boys said the wild rabbits played with the tame ones in the yard.

The prevailing trees there are red cedar, tulip, white oak, pin oak, chestnut oak, etc., gum-tree, pitch pine, and, of smaller trees, the *Cornus florida*. There was no white pine and but two or three small white birches.

The wire fence was something new, and the tongue used by an Irishwoman to wipe a cinder out of her son's eye. The four feet of flame issuing from one chimney of the State of Maine steamer after we passed her (the sun just set), not yellow and fiery but white like a lit cloud, or her smoke reflecting the departing day.

A clayey soil at Eagleswood, making very bad walking even after a frosty night only. Clay mixed with the red sandstone sand. When I washed my hands, though but little soiled, the water was colored red.

Am glad to get back to New England, the dry, sandy, wholesome land, land of scrub oaks and birches and white pines, now in her russet dress, reminding me of her flaxen-headed children.

Saw some very large true hornbeams.

The pastures, etc., at Eagleswood were densely overrun with wild carrots, the commonest weed and a great pest.

When I got back to New England the grass seemed bleached a shade or two more flaxen, more completely withered.

Nov. 25. *Tuesday.* Get home again this morning.

Nov. 27. P. M. — Take a turn down the river. A painted tortoise sinking to the bottom, and apparently tree sparrows along the shore.

Nov. 28. P. M. — To chestnut wood by Turnpike, to see if I could find my comb, probably lost out of my pocket when I climbed and shook a chestnut tree more than a month ago.

Unexpectedly find many chestnuts in the burs which have fallen some time ago. Many are spoiled, but the rest, being thus moistened, are softer and sweeter than a month ago, very agreeable to my palate. The burs from some cause having fallen without dropping their nuts.

As I stood looking down the hill over Emerson's young wood-lot there, perhaps at 3.30 P. M., the sunlight reflected from the many ascending twigs of bare young chestnuts and birches, very dense and ascendant with a marked parallelism, they reminded me of the lines of gossamer at this season, being almost exactly similar to the eye. It is a true November phenomenon.

Nov. 29. Begins to snow this morning and snows slowly and interruptedly with a little fine hail all day till it is several inches deep. This the first snow I have seen, but they say the ground was whitened for a short time some weeks ago.

It has been a remarkably pleasant November, warmer and pleasanter than last year.

Nov. 30. *Sunday.* P. M. — To Cliffs *via* Hubbard's Grove.

Several inches of snow, but a rather soft and mild air still. Now see the empty chalices of the blue-curls and the rich brown-fruited pinweed above the crust. (The very cat was full of spirits this morning, rushing about and frisking on the snow-crust, which bore her alone. When I came home from New Jersey the other day, was struck with the sudden growth and stateliness of our cat Min, — his cheeks puffed out like a regular grimalkin. I suspect it is a new coat of fur against the winter chiefly. The cat is a third bigger than a month ago, like a patriarch wrapped in furs; and a mouse a day, I hear, is nothing to him now.) This as I go through the Depot Field, where the stub ends of corn-stalks rise above the snow. I find half a dozen russets, touched and discolored within by frost, still hanging on Wheeler's tree by the wall.

I see the fine, thin, yellowish stipule of the pine leaves now, on the snow by Hubbard's Grove and where some creature has eaten the resinous terminal pitch pine buds.[1] In Hubbard's bank wall field, beyond the brook, see the tracks of many sparrows that have run from weed to weed, as if a chain had dropped there. Not an apple is left in the orchard on Fair Haven Hill; not a track there of walker. Now all plants are withered and blanched, except perhaps some *Vaccinium vacillans* red leaves which sprang up in the burning last spring. Here and there a squirrel or a rabbit has hastily crossed the path.

Minott told me on Friday of an oldish man and woman who had brought to a muster here once a great

[1] *Vide* spring of '59.

leg of bacon boiled, to turn a penny with. The skin, as thick as sole-leather, was flayed and turned back, displaying the tempting flesh. A tall, raw-boned, omnivorous heron of a Yankee came along and bargained with the woman, who was awaiting a customer, for as much of that as he could eat. He ate and ate and ate, making a surprising hole, greatly to the amusement of the lookers-on, till the woman in her despair, unfaithful to her engagement, appealed to the police to drive him off.

Sophia, describing the first slight whitening of snow a few weeks ago, said that when she awoke she noticed a certain bluish-white reflection on the wall and, looking out, saw the ground whitened with snow.

My first sight of snow this year I got as I was surveying about the 5th of November in a great wooded gully making up from the Raritan River, in Perth Amboy, N. J. It was a few fine flakes in the chilly air, which very few who were out noticed at all.

That country was remarkable for its gullies, commonly well wooded, with a stream at the bottom. One was called Souman's [?] Gully, the only good name for any feature of the landscape thereabouts, yet the inhabitants objected especially to this word "gully."

That is a great place for oysters, and the inhabitants of Amboy are said to be very generally well off in consequence. All are allowed to gather oysters on the flats at low tide, and at such times I saw thirty or forty wading about with baskets and picking them up, the indigenous ones. Off the mouth of the Raritan, I saw about seventy-five boats one morning busily taking up

the oysters which they had laid down, — their usual morning's work.

I used to get my clothes covered with beggar-ticks in the fields there, and burs, small and large.

Minot Pratt tells me that he watched the fringed gentian this year, and it lasted till the first week in November.

V

DECEMBER, 1856

(ÆT. 39)

Dec. 1. P. M. — By path around Walden.

With this little snow of the 29th *ult.* there is yet pretty good sledding, for it lies solid.

I see the old pale-faced farmer out again on his sled now for the five-thousandth time,[1] — Cyrus Hubbard, a man of a certain New England probity and worth, immortal and natural, like a natural product, like the sweetness of a nut, like the toughness of hickory. He, too, is a redeemer for me. How superior actually to the faith he professes! He is not an office-seeker. What an institution, what a revelation is a man! We are wont foolishly to think that the creed which a man professes is more significant than the fact he is. It matters not how hard the conditions seemed, how mean the world, for a man is a prevalent force and a new law himself. He is a system whose law is to be observed. The old farmer condescends to countenance still this nature and order of things. It is a great encouragement that an honest man makes this world his abode. He rides on the sled drawn by oxen, world-wise, yet comparatively so young, as if they had seen scores of winters. The farmer spoke to me, I can swear, clean, cold, moderate as the snow.

[1] [Channing, p. 108.]

He does not melt the snow where he treads. Yet what a faint impression that encounter may make on me after all! Moderate, natural, true, as if he were made of earth, stone, wood, snow.[1] I thus meet in this universe kindred of mine, composed of these elements. I see men like frogs; their peeping I partially understand.

I go by Hayden's and take A. Wheeler's wood-path to railroad.

Slate-colored snowbirds flit before me in the path, feeding on the seeds on the snow, the countless little brown seeds that begin to be scattered over the snow, so much the more obvious to bird and beast. A hundred kinds of indigenous grain are harvested now, broadcast upon the surface of the snow. Thus at a critical season these seeds are shaken down on to a clean white napkin, unmixed with dirt and rubbish, and off this the little pensioners pick them. Their clean table is thus spread a few inches or feet above the ground. Will wonder become extinct in me? Shall I become insensible as a fungus?

A ridge of earth, with the red cockscomb lichen on it, peeps out still at the rut's edge. The dear wholesome color of shrub oak leaves, so clean and firm, not decaying, but which have put on a kind of immortality, not wrinkled and thin like the white oak leaves, but full-veined and plump, as nearer earth. Well-tanned leather on the one side, sun-tanned, color of colors, color of the cow and the deer, silver-downy beneath, turned toward the late bleached and russet fields.

[1] [Channing, pp. 68, 69.]

What are acanthus leaves and the rest to this? Emblem of my winter condition. I love and could embrace the shrub oak with its scanty garment of leaves rising above the snow, lowly whispering to me, akin to winter thoughts, and sunsets, and to all virtue. Covert which the hare and the partridge seek, and I too seek. What cousin of mine is the shrub oak? How can any man suffer long? For a sense of want is a prayer, and all prayers are answered. Rigid as iron, clean as the atmosphere, hardy as virtue, innocent and sweet as a maiden is the shrub oak. In proportion as I know and love it, I am natural and sound as a partridge. I felt a positive yearning toward one bush this afternoon. There was a match found for me at last. I fell in love with a shrub oak.[1] Tenacious of its leaves, which shrivel not but retain a certain wintry life in them, firm shields, painted in fast colors a rich brown. The deer mouse, too, knows the shrub oak and has its hole in the snow by the shrub oak's stem.

Now, too, I remark in many places ridges and fields of fine russet or straw-colored grass rising above the snow, and beds of empty straw-colored heads of everlasting and ragged-looking Roman wormwood.

The blue-curls' chalices stand empty, and waiting evidently to be filled with ice.

I see great thimble-berry bushes rising above the snow, with still a rich, rank bloom on them, as in July. Hypæthral mildew, elysian fungus! To see the bloom on a thimble-berry stem lasting into midwinter! What a salve that would make, collected and boxed![2]

[1] [Channing, p. 102.]

[2] [Channing, pp. 112, 113.]

No, I am a stranger in your towns. I am not at home at French's, or Lovejoy's, or Savery's. I can winter more to my mind amid the shrub oaks. I have made arrangements to stay with them.

The shrub oak, lowly, loving the earth and spreading over it, tough, thick-leaved; leaves firm and sound in winter and rustling like leather shields; leaves fair and wholesome to the eye, clean and smooth to the touch. Tough to support the snow, not broken down by it. Well-nigh useless to man. A sturdy phalanx, hard to break through. Product of New England's surface. Bearing many striped acorns.[1]

I have seen more chestnuts in the streets of New York than anywhere else this year, large and plump ones, roasting in the street, roasting and popping on the steps of banks and exchanges. Was surprised to see that the citizens made as much of the nuts of the wild-wood as the squirrels. Not only the country boys, all New York goes a-nutting. Chestnuts for cabmen and newsboys, for not only are squirrels to be fed.

Well named *shrub oak*. Low, robust, hardy, indigenous. Well known to the striped squirrel and the partridge and rabbit. The squirrel nibbles its nuts sitting upon an old stump of its larger cousins. What is Peruvian bark to your bark? How many rents I owe to you! how many eyes put out! how many bleeding fingers! How many shrub oak patches I have been through, stooping, winding my way, bending the twigs aside, guiding myself by the sun, over hills and valleys and plains, resting in clear grassy spaces! I love to go

[1] [Channing, p. 102.]

through a patch of shrub oak in a bee-line, where you tear your clothes and put your eyes out.[1]

Dec. 2. P. M. — Got in my boat, which before I had got out and turned up on the bank. It made me sweat to wheel it home through the snow, I am so unused to the work of late.

Then walked up the railroad. The clear straw-colored grass and some weeds contrasting with the snow it rises above. Saw little in this walk. Saw Melvin's lank bluish-white black-spotted hound, and Melvin with his gun near, going home at eve. He follows hunting, praise be to him, as regularly in our tame fields as the farmers follow farming. Persistent Genius! How I respect him and thank him for him! [*sic*] I trust the Lord will provide us with another Melvin when he is gone. How good in him to follow his own bent, and not continue at the Sabbath-school all his days! What a wealth he thus becomes in the neighborhood! Few know how to take the census. I thank my stars for Melvin. I think of him with gratitude when I am going to sleep, grateful that he exists, — that Melvin who is such a trial to his mother. Yet he is agreeable to me as a tinge of russet on the hillside. I would fain give thanks morning and evening for my blessings. Awkward, gawky, loose-hung, dragging his legs after him. He is my contemporary and neighbor. He is one tribe, I am another, and we are not at war.

I saw but little in my walk. Saw no bird, only a crow's track in the snow.

[1] [Channing, pp. 102, 103.]

How quickly men come out on to the highways with their sleds and improve the first snow! The farmer has begun to play with his sled as early as any of the boys. See him already with mittens on and thick boots well greased — been soaking in grease all summer, perhaps — and fur cap and red comforter about his throat, though it is not yet cold, walking beside his team with contented thoughts. This drama every day in the streets! This is the theatre I go to. There he goes with his venture behind him, and often he gets aboard for a change.

As for the sensuality in Whitman's "Leaves of Grass," I do not so much wish that it was not written, as that men and women were so pure that they could read it without harm.

Dec. 3. About as much more snow as fell on the 29th November has fallen in the night upon that, so stilly that we were not aware of it till we looked out. It has not even lodged on the window-sashes, and I am first convinced it has fallen by seeing the old tracks in the road covered and the roofs uniformly white. It is now somewhat misty, or perhaps a fine rain beginning.

Fewer weeds now rise above the snow. Pinweed (or sarothra) is quite concealed. It is a uniform white napkin in many fields. But not yet are the Great Meadows fairly whitened. There, as I look sideways at them, I see still the stretching acres of straw-colored brown grass and weeds. The pastures are uniformly white, but the meadows are that rich, wild brown straw-

color, or only white in ridges where there is less grass, reminding of the fall, and of water beneath.

The steam of the locomotive stretches low over the earth, enveloping the cars.

The sight of the sedgy meadows that are not yet snowed up while the cultivated fields and pastures are a uniform white, — fenny places which are longer enabled to resist the aggressions of winter! It takes a deep snow to blot out the traces of summer there, for the grass did not get cut this year.

Mizzles and rains all day, making sloshy walking which sends us all to the shoemaker's. Bought me a pair of cowhide boots, to be prepared for winter walks. The shoemaker praised them because they were made a year ago. I feel like an armed man now. The man who has bought his boots feels like him who has got in his winter's wood. There they stand beside me in the chamber, expectant, dreaming of far woods and wood-paths, of frost-bound or sloshy roads, or of being bound with skate-straps and clogged with ice-dust.

For years my appetite was so strong that I fed — I browsed — on the pine forest's edge seen against the winter horizon. How cheap my diet still! Dry sand that has fallen in railroad cuts and slid on the snow beneath is a condiment to my walk. I ranged about like a gray moose, looking at the spiring tops of the trees, and fed my imagination on them, — far-away, ideal trees not disturbed by the axe of the wood-cutter, nearer and nearer fringes and eyelashes of my eye. Where was the sap, the fruit, the value of the forest for me, but in that line where it was relieved against the sky?

That was my wood-lot; that was my lot in the woods. The silvery needles of the pine straining the light.

A man killed at the fatal Lincoln Bridge died in the village the other night. The only words he uttered while he lingered in his delirium were "All right," probably the last which he had uttered before he was struck, — brave, prophetic words to go out of the world with! good as "I still live," but on no razors.[1]

How I love the simple, reserved countrymen, my neighbors, who mind their own business and let me alone, who never waylaid nor shot at me, to my knowledge, when I crossed their fields, though each one has a gun in his house! For nearly twoscore years I have known, at a distance, these long-suffering men, whom I never spoke to, who never spoke to me, and now feel a certain tenderness for them, as if this long probation were but the prelude to an eternal friendship. What a long trial we have withstood, and how much more admirable we are to each other, perchance, than if we had been bedfellows! I am not only grateful because Veias, and Homer, and Christ, and Shakespeare have lived, but I am grateful for Minott, and Rice, and Melvin, and Goodwin, and Puffer even. I see Melvin all alone filling his sphere, in russet suit, which no other could fill or suggest. He takes up as much room in nature as the most famous.

Six weeks ago I noticed the advent of chickadees and their winter habits. As you walk along a wood-side, a restless little flock of them, whose notes you hear at

[1] [Daniel Webster's last words were at one time etched on razors made by Wade & Butcher of Sheffield.]

a distance, will seem to say, "Oh, there he goes! Let 's pay our respects to him." And they will flit after and close to you, and naïvely peck at the nearest twig to you, as if they were minding their own business all the while without any reference to you.

Dec. 4. Ceased raining and mizzling last evening, and cleared off, with a high northwest wind, which shook the house, coming in fitful gusts, but only they who slept on the west sides of houses knew of it.

7.30 A. M. — Take a run down the riverside.

Scare up a few sparrows, which take shelter in Keyes's arbor-vitæ row. The snow has now settled, owing to the rain, and presents no longer a level surface, but a succession of little hills and hollows, as if the whole earth had been a potato or corn field, and there is a slight crust to it.

Dark waves are chasing each other across the river from northwest to southeast and breaking the edge of the snow ice which has formed for half a rod in width along the edge, and the fragments of broken ice, what arctic voyagers call "brash," carry forward the undulation.

I am pleased to see from afar the highest water-mark of a spring freshet on Cheney's boat-house, a level light-colored mark about an inch wide running the whole length of the building, now several years old, where probably a thin ice chafed it.

2 P. M. — By Clamshell and back over Hubbard's Bridge.

I notice that the swallow-holes in the bank behind Dennis's, which is partly washed away, are flat-elliptical, three times or more as wide horizontally as they are deep vertically, or about three inches by one.

Saw and heard cheep faintly one little tree sparrow, the neat chestnut crowned and winged and white-barred bird, perched on a large and solitary white birch. So clean and tough, made to withstand the winter. This color reminds me of the upper side of the shrub oak leaf. I love the few homely colors of Nature at this season, — her strong wholesome browns, her sober and primeval grays, her celestial blue, her vivacious green, her pure, cold, snowy white.[1] An *F. hyemalis* also.

In the sprout-land by the road, in the woods this side of C. Miles's, much gray goldenrod is mixed with the shrub oak. It reminds me of the color of the rabbits which run there. Thus Nature feeds her children chiefly with color. I have no doubt that it is an important relief to the eyes which have long rested on snow, to rest on brown oak leaves and the bark of trees. We want the greatest variety within the smallest compass, and yet without glaring diversity, and we have it in the colors of the withered oak leaves. The white, so curled and shrivelled and *pale;* the black (*?*), more flat and glossy and darker brown; the red, much like the black, but *perhaps* less dark, and less deeply cut. The scarlet still occasionally retains some blood in its veins.

Smooth white reaches of ice, as long as the river,

[1] [Channing, p. 98.]

on each side are threatening to bridge over its dark-blue artery any night. They remind me of a trap that is set for it, which the frost will spring. Each day at present, the wriggling river nibbles off the edges of the trap which have advanced in the night. It is a close contest between day and night, heat and cold.

Already you see the tracks of sleds leading by unusual routes, where will be seen no trace of them in summer, into far fields and woods, crowding aside and pressing down the snow to where some heavy log or stone has thought itself secure, and the spreading tracks also of the heavy, slow-paced oxen, of the well-shod farmer, who turns out his feet. Ere long, when the cold is stronger, these tracks will lead the walker deep into remote swamps impassable in summer. All the earth is a highway then.

I see where the pretty brown bird-like birch scales and winged seeds have been blown into the numerous hollows of the thin crusted snow. So bountiful a table is spread for the birds. For how many thousand miles this grain is scattered over the earth, under the feet of all walkers, in Boxboro and Cambridge alike! and rarely an eye distinguishes it.

Sophia says that just before I came home Min caught a mouse and was playing with it in the yard. It had got away from her once or twice, and she had caught it again; and now it was stealing off again, as she lay complacently watching it with her paws tucked under her, when her friend Riordan's stout but solitary cock stepped up inquisitively, looked down at it with one eye, turning his head, then picked it up by the tail and

gave it two or three whacks on the ground, and giving it a dexterous toss into the air, caught it in its open mouth, and it went head foremost and alive down his capacious throat in the twinkling of an eye, never again to be seen in this world, Min, all the while, with paws comfortably tucked under her, looking on unconcerned. What matters it one mouse more or less to her? The cock walked off amid the currant bushes, stretched his neck up, and gulped once or twice, and the deed was accomplished, and then he crowed lustily in celebration of the exploit. It might be set down among the *gesta* (if not *digesta*) *Gallorum*. There were several human witnesses. It is a question whether Min ever understood where that mouse went to. Min sits composedly sentinel, with paws tucked under her, a good part of her days at present, by some ridiculous little hole, the possible entryway of a mouse. She has a habit of stretching or sharpening her claws on all smooth hair-bottomed chairs and sofas, greatly to my mother's vexation.

He who abstains from visiting another for magnanimous reasons enjoys better society alone.

I for one am not bound to flatter men. That is not exactly the value of me.

How many thousand acres are there now of pitchered blue-curls and ragged wormwood rising above the shallow snow? The granary of the birds. They were not observed against the dark ground, but the first snow comes and reveals them. Then I come to fields in which the fragrant everlasting, straw-colored and almost odorless, and the dark taller St. John's-wort prevail.

When I bought my boots yesterday, Hastings ran over his usual rigmarole. Had he any stout old-fashioned cowhide boots? Yes, he thought he could suit me. "There 's something that 'll turn water about as well as anything. Billings had a pair just like them the other [day], and he said they kept his feet as dry as a bone. But what 's more than that, they were made above a year ago upon honor. They are just the thing, you may depend on it. I had an eye to you when I was making them." "But they are too soft and thin for me. I want them to be thick and stand out from my foot." "Well, there is another pair, maybe a little thicker. I 'll tell you what it is, these were made of dry hide."

Both were warranted single leather and not split. I took the last. But after wearing them round this cold day I found that the little snow which rested on them and melted wet the upper leather through like paper and wet my feet, and I told H. of it, that he might have an offset to Billings's experience. "Well, you can't expect a new pair of boots to turn water at first. I tell the farmers that the time to buy boots is at midsummer, or when they are hoeing their potatoes, and the pores have a chance to get filled with dirt."

It is remarkably good sleighing to-day, considering the little snow and the rain of yesterday, but it is slippery and hobbly for walkers.

My first botany, as I remember, was Bigelow's "Plants of Boston and Vicinity," which I began to use about twenty years ago, looking chiefly for the popular names and the short references to the localities of plants, even without any regard to the plant. I also learned the

names of many, but without using any system, and forgot them soon. I was not inclined to pluck flowers; preferred to leave them where they were, liked them best there. I was never in the least interested in plants in the house. But from year to year we look at Nature with new eyes. About half a dozen years ago I found myself again attending to plants with more method, looking out the name of each one and remembering it. I began to bring them home in my hat, a straw one with a scaffold lining to it, which I called my botany-box. I never used any other, and when some whom I visited were evidently surprised at its dilapidated look, as I deposited it on their front entry table, I assured them it was not so much my hat as my botany-box. I remember gazing with interest at the swamps about those days and wondering if I could ever attain to such familiarity with plants that I should know the species of every twig and leaf in them, that I should be acquainted with every plant (excepting grasses and cryptogamous ones), summer and winter, that I saw. Though I knew most of the flowers, and there were not in any particular swamp more than half a dozen shrubs that I did not know, yet these made it seem like a maze to me, of a thousand strange species, and I even thought of commencing at one end and looking it faithfully and laboriously through till I knew it all. I little thought that in a year or two I should have attained to that knowledge without all that labor. Still I never studied botany, and do not to-day systematically, the most natural system is still so artificial. I wanted to know my neighbors, if possible, — to get a little nearer to them.

I soon found myself observing when plants first blossomed and leafed, and I followed it up early and late, far and near, several years in succession, running to different sides of the town and into the neighboring towns, often between twenty and thirty miles in a day. I often visited a particular plant four or five miles distant, half a dozen times within a fortnight, that I might know exactly when it opened, beside attending to a great many others in different directions and some of them equally distant, at the same time. At the same time I had an eye for birds and whatever else might offer.

Dec. 5. Clear, cold winter weather. What a contrast between this week and last, when I talked of setting out apple trees!

P. M. — Walked over the Hill.

The Indians have at length got a regular load of wood. It is odd to see a pile of good oak wood beside their thin cotton tents in the snow, the wood-pile which is to be burnt within is so much more substantial than the house. Yet they do not appear to mind the cold, though one side the tent is partly open, and all are flapping in the wind, and there is a sick child in one. The children play in the snow in front, as before more substantial houses.

The river is well skimmed over in most places, though it will not bear, — wherever there is least current, as in broad places, or where there is least wind, as by the bridges. The ice trap was sprung last night.

As I walk along the side of the Hill, a pair of nut-

hatches flit by toward a walnut, flying low in mid-course and then ascending to the tree. I hear one's faint *tut tut* or *gnah gnah* — no doubt heard a good way by its mate now flown into the next tree — as it is ascending the trunk or branch of a walnut in a zigzag manner, hitching along, prying into the crevices of the bark; and now it has found a savory morsel, which it pauses to devour, then flits to a new bough. It is a chubby bird, white, slate-color, and black.

It is a perfectly cloudless and simple winter sky. A white moon, half full, in the pale or dull blue heaven and a whiteness like the reflection of the snow, extending up from the horizon all around a quarter the way up to the zenith. I can imagine that I see it shooting up like an aurora. This at 4 P. M. About the sun it is only whiter than elsewhere, or there is only the faintest possible tinge of yellow there.

There are a great many walnuts on the trees, seen black against the sky, and the wind has scattered many over the snow-crust. It would be easier gathering them now than ever.

The johnswort and the larger pinweed are conspicuous above the snow. Some fine straw-colored grasses, as delicate as the down on a young man's cheek, still rise above this crusted snow, and even a recess is melted around them, so gently has it been deposited.

The sun goes down and leaves not a blush in the sky.

This morning I saw Riordan's cock thrust out the window on to the snow to seek his sustenance, and now, as I go by at night, he is waiting on the front door-step to be let in.

My themes shall not be far-fetched. I will tell of homely every-day phenomena and adventures. Friends! Society! It seems to me that I have an abundance of it, there is so much that I rejoice and sympathize with, and men, too, that I never speak to but only know and think of. What you call bareness and poverty is to me simplicity. God could not be unkind to me if he should try. I love the winter, with its imprisonment and its cold, for it compels the prisoner to try new fields and resources. I love to have the river closed up for a season and a pause put to my boating, to be obliged to get my boat in. I shall launch it again in the spring with so much more pleasure. This is an advantage in point of abstinence and moderation compared with the seaside boating, where the boat ever lies on the shore. I love best to have each thing in its season only, and enjoy doing without it at all other times. It is the greatest of all advantages to enjoy no advantage at all. I find it invariably true, the poorer I am, the richer I am. What you consider my disadvantage, I consider my advantage. While you are pleased to get knowledge and culture in many ways, I am delighted to think that I am getting rid of them. I have never got over my surprise that I should have been born into the most estimable place in all the world, and in the very nick of time, too.[1]

[1] [Channing, p. 89.]

Dec. 6. *Saturday.* 2 P. M. — To Hubbard's Bridge and Holden Swamp and up river on ice to F. Pond Crossing, just below pond; back on east side of river.

Skating is fairly begun. The river is generally frozen over, though it will bear quite across in very few places. Much of the ice in the middle is dark and thin, having been formed last night, and when you stamp you see the water trembling in spots here and there.

I can walk through the spruce swamp now dry-shod, amid the water andromeda and *Kalmia glauca.* I feel an affection for the rich brown fruit of the panicled andromeda growing about the swamp, hard, dry, inedible, suitable to the season. The dense panicles of the berries are of a handsome form, made to endure, lasting often over two seasons, only becoming darker and gray.

How handsome every one of these leaves that are blown about the snow-crust or lie neglected beneath, soon to turn to mould! Not merely a matted mass of fibres like a sheet of paper, but a perfect organism and system in itself, so that no mortal has ever yet discerned or explored its beauty.

Against this swamp I take to the riverside where the ice will bear. White snow ice it is, but pretty smooth, but it is quite glare close to the shore and wherever the water overflowed yesterday. On the meadows, where this overflow was so deep that it did not freeze solid, it cracks from time to time with a threatening squeak. I see here and there very faint tracks of muskrats or minks, made when it was soft and sloshy, lead-

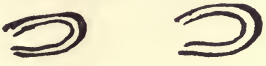
ing from the springy shore to the then open middle, — the faintest possible vestiges, which are only seen in a favorable light.

Just this side of Bittern Cliff, I see a very remarkable track of an otter, made undoubtedly December 3d, when this snow ice was mere slosh. It had come up through a hole (now black ice) by the stem of a button-bush, and, apparently, pushed its way through the slosh, as through snow on land, leaving a track eight inches wide, more or less, with the now frozen snow shoved up two inches high on each side, *i. e.* two inches above the general level. Where the ice was firmer are seen only the tracks of its feet. It had crossed the open middle (now thin black ice) and continued its singular trail to the opposite shore, as if a narrow sled had been drawn bottom upward.

At Bittern Cliff I saw where they had been playing, sliding, or fishing, apparently to-day, on the snow-covered rocks, on which, for a rod upward and as much in width, the snow was trodden and worn quite smooth, as if twenty had trodden and slid there for several hours. Their droppings are a mass of fishes' scales and bones, — loose, scaly black masses. At this point the black ice approached within three or four feet of the rock, and there was an open space just there, a foot or two across, which appeared to have been kept open by them. I continued along up that side and crossed on white ice just below the pond. The river was all tracked up with otters, from Bittern Cliff upward. Sometimes one had trailed his tail, apparently edgewise, making a mark like the tail of a deer mouse;

sometimes they were moving fast, and there was an interval of five feet between the tracks. I saw one place where there was a zigzag piece of black ice two rods long and one foot wide in the midst of the white, which I was surprised to find had been made by an otter pushing his way through the slosh. He had left fishes' scales, etc., at the end. These very conspicuous tracks generally commenced and terminated at some button-bush or willow, where a black ice now masked the hole of that date. It is surprising that our hunters know no more about them.

I see also what I take to be rabbit's tracks made in that slosh, shaped like a horse's track, only rather longer and larger. They had set out to cross the river, but, coming to open water, turned back.



Each pinweed, etc., has melted a little hollow or rough cave in the snow, in which the lower part at least snugly hides. They are never more interesting than now on Lechea Plain, since they are perfectly relieved, brown on white.

Far the greater part of the shrub oak leaves are fallen.

When I speak of the otter to our oldest village doctor, who should be *ex officio* our naturalist, he is greatly surprised, not knowing that such an animal is found in these parts, and I have to remind him that the Pilgrims sent home many otter skins in the first vessels that returned, together with beaver, mink, and black fox skins, and 1156 pounds of otter skins in the years 1631–36, which brought fourteen or fifteen shillings

a pound, also 12,530 pounds of beaver skin. *Vide* Bradford's History.

Though so many oak leaves hang on all winter, you will be surprised on going into the woods at any time, only a short time after a fall of snow, to see how many have lately fallen on it and are driven about over it, so that you would think there could be none left till spring.

Where I crossed the river on the roughish white ice, there were coarse ripple-marks two or three feet apart and convex to the south or up-stream, extending quite across, and many spots of black ice a foot wide, more or less in the midst of the white, where probably was water yesterday. The water, apparently, had been blown southerly on to the ice already formed, and hence the ripple-marks.

In many places the otters appeared to have gone floundering along in the sloshy ice and water.

On all sides, in swamps and about their edges and in the woods, the bare shrubs are sprinkled with buds, more or less noticeable and pretty, their little gemmæ or gems, their most vital and attractive parts now, almost all the greenness and color left, greens and salads for the birds and rabbits. Our eyes go searching along the stems for what is most vivacious and characteristic, the concentrated summer gone into winter quarters. For we are hunters pursuing the summer on snow-shoes and skates, all winter long. There is really but one season in our hearts.

What variety the pinweeds, clear brown seedy plants, give to the fields, which are yet but shallowly covered with snow! You were not aware before how extensive these grain-fields. Not till the snow comes are the beauty and variety and richness of vegetation ever fully revealed. Some plants are now seen more simply and distinctly and to advantage. The pinweeds, etc., have been for the most part confounded with the russet or brown earth beneath them, being seen against a background of the same color, but now, being seen against a pure white background, they are as distinct as if held up to the sky.

Some plants seen, then, in their prime or perfection, when supporting an icy burden in their empty chalices.

Dec. 7. *Sunday.* P. M. — Take my first skate to Fair Haven Pond.

It takes my feet a few moments to get used to the skates. I see the track of one skater who has preceded me this morning. This is the first skating. I keep mostly to the smooth ice about a rod wide next the shore commonly, where there was an overflow a day or two ago. There is not the slightest overflow to-day, and yet it is warm (thermometer at 25 at 4.30 P. M.). It must be that the river is falling. Now I go shaking over hobbly places, now shoot over a bridge of ice only a foot wide between the water and the shore at a bend, — Hubbard Bath, — always so at first there. Now I suddenly see the trembling surface of water where I thought were black spots of ice only around me. The river is rather low, so that I cannot keep the river above

the Clamshell Bend. I am confined to a very narrow edging of ice in the meadow, gliding with unexpected ease through withered sedge, but slipping sometimes on a twig; again taking to the snow to reach the next ice, but this rests my feet; straddling the bare black willows, winding between the button-bushes, and following narrow threadings of ice amid the sedge, which bring me out to clear fields unexpectedly. Occasionally I am obliged to take a few strokes over black and thin-looking ice, where the neighboring bank is springy, and am slow to acquire confidence in it, but, returning, how bold I am! Where the meadow seemed only sedge and snow, I find a complete ice connection.

At Cardinal Shore, as usual, there is a great crescent of hobbly ice, where, two or three days ago, the north-

west wind drove the waves back up-stream and broke up the edge of the ice. This crescent is eight or ten rods wide and twice as many long, and consists of cakes of ice from a few inches to half a dozen feet in

diameter, with each a raised edge all around, where apparently the floating sludge has been caught and accumulated. (Occasionally the raised edge is six inches high!) This is mottled black and white, and is not yet safe. It is like skating over so many rails, or the edges of saws. Now I glide over a field of white air-cells close to the surface, with coverings no thicker than egg-shells, cutting through with a sharp crackling sound. There are many of those singular spider-shaped dark places amid the white ice, where the surface water has run through some days ago.

As I enter on Fair Haven Pond, I see already three pickerel-fishers retreating from it, drawing a sled through the Baker Farm, and see where they have been fishing, by the shining chips of ice about the holes. Others were here even yesterday, as it appears. The pond must have been frozen by the 4th at least. Some fisherman or other is ready with his reels and bait as soon as the ice will bear, whether it be Saturday or Sunday. Theirs, too, is a sort of devotion, though it be called hard names by the preacher, who perhaps could not endure the cold and wet any day. Perhaps he dines off their pickerel on Monday at the hotel. The ice appears to be but three or four inches thick.

That grand old poem called Winter is round again without any connivance of mine. As I sit under Lee's Cliff, where the snow is melted, amid sere pennyroyal and frost-bitten catnep, I look over my shoulder upon an arctic scene. I see with surprise the pond a dumb white surface of ice speckled with snow, just as so many winters before, where so lately were lapsing waves or

smooth reflecting water. I see the holes which the pickerel-fisher has made, and I see him, too, retreating over the hills, drawing his sled behind him. The water is already skimmed over again there. I hear, too, the familiar belching voice of the pond. It seemed as if winter had come without any interval since midsummer, and I was prepared to see it flit away by the time I again looked over my shoulder. It was as if I had dreamed it. But I see that the farmers have had time to gather their harvests as usual, and the seasons have revolved as slowly as in the first autumn of my life. The winters come now as fast as snowflakes. It is wonderful that old men do not lose their reckoning. It was summer, and now again it is winter. Nature loves this rhyme so well that she never tires of repeating it. So sweet and wholesome is the winter, so simple and moderate, so satisfactory and perfect, that her children will never weary of it. What a poem! an epic in blank verse, enriched with a million tinkling rhymes. It is solid beauty. It has been subjected to the vicissitudes of millions of years of the gods, and not a single superfluous ornament remains. The severest and coldest of the immortal critics have shot their arrows at and pruned it till it cannot be amended.[1]

The swamp white oak leaves are like the shrub oak in having two colors above and beneath. They are considerably curled, so as to show their silvery lining, though firm. Hardy and handsome, with a fair silver winter lining.

Am pleased to see the holes where men have dug for

[1] [Channing, p. 111.]

money, since they remind me that some are dreaming still like children, though of impracticable things, — dreaming of finding money, and trying to put their dream in practice. It proves that men live Arabian nights and days still. I would [rather] they should have even that kind of faith than none at all. If any silly or abominable or superstitious practice ever prevailed among any savage race, just that may be repeated in the most civilized society to-day.

You will see full-grown woods where the oaks and pines or birches are separated by right lines, growing in squares or other rectilinear figures, because different lots were cut at different times.

Dec. 8. Thermometer at 8 A. M. 8° above zero. Probably the coldest day yet.

Bradford, in his "History of the Plymouth Plantation," remembering the condition of the Pilgrims on their arrival in Cape Cod Bay the 11th of November, 1620, O. S. (page 79): "Which way soever they turned their eyes (save upward to the heavens) they could have little solace or content in respect of any outward objects. For summer being done, all things stand upon them with a weather-beaten face; and the whole country, full of woods and thickets, represented a wild and savage hue." Such was a New England November in 1620 to Bradford's eyes, and such, no doubt, it would be to his eyes in the country still. However, it required no little courage to found a colony here at that season of the year.

The earliest mention of anything like a glaze in New

England that I remember is in Bradford's "History of the Plymouth Plantation," page 83, where he describes the second expedition with the shallop from Cape Cod Harbor in search of a settlement, the 6th of December, O. S. "The weather was very cold, and it froze so hard as the spray of the sea lighting on their coats, they were as if they had been glazed." Bradford was one of the ten principal ones. That same night they reached the bottom of the Bay and saw the Indians cutting up a blackfish. Nature has not changed one iota.

Dec. 9. P. M. — Railroad to Lincoln Bridge and back by road.

There is scarcely a particle of ice in Walden yet, and that close to the edge, apparently, on the west and northwest sides. Yet Fair Haven was so solidly frozen on the 6th that there was fishing on it, and yesterday I met Goodwin bringing a fine lot of pickerel from Flint's, which was frozen at least four inches thick. This is, no doubt, owing solely to the greater depth of Walden.

As I stand on the railroad against Heywood's meadow, the sun now getting low in the west, the leaves of the young oaks in Emerson's sprout-land on the side of the hill make a very agreeable thick, rug-like stuff for the eye to rest on. The white oak leaves are a very pale brown, but the scarlet oaks are quite red now in the sun. Near at hand they are conspicuously ruddy in any light, the scarlet oaks. (Those black oaks which I examine near at hand afterward are a pure, somewhat yellowish brown.) This slight difference of shading makes a very pleasing variety on this densely covered

hillside, like a rich embroidered stuff. One species does not stand by itself, but they are dispersed and intimately mingled. These oak leaves have more distinct characters now at this distance than in summer. It is as if a rich rug, with stuff six or eight feet deep, had been dropped over this hill, opening the stuff on the brow, dyed of various shades of enduring brown, the wholesome and strong color which Nature loves; and here and there the now dark green of a pine is seen. When the wind rises, the leaves rustle their content.

The sunlight reveals no redness in the white oak leaves. The bright colors of autumn are transient; these browns are permanent. These are not so much withered leaves, for they have a wintry life in them still, and the tanned or bronzed color of assured health. They are a sort of epidermis or bark, not at once thrown off, serving, perhaps, to protect the trees as well as the quadrupeds and birds.

Coming through the Walden woods, I see already great heaps of oak leaves collected in certain places on the snow-crust by the roadside, where an eddy deposited them. It suggests that a certain law has attended their movements, which appeared so lawless, even as with the iron filings under the influence of music. The greater part that have fallen are deposited in clear and crispy heaps in particular places. They are beds which invite the traveller to repose on them, even in this wintry weather.

From a little east of Wyman's I look over the pond westward. The sun is near setting, away beyond Fair Haven. A bewitching stillness reigns through all the

woodland and over the snow-clad landscape. Indeed, the winter day in the woods or fields has commonly the stillness of twilight. The pond is perfectly smooth and full of light. I hear only the strokes of a lingering woodchopper at a distance, and the melodious hooting of an owl, which is as common and marked a sound as the axe or the locomotive whistle. Yet where does the ubiquitous hooter sit, and who sees him? In whose wood-lot is he to be found? Few eyes have rested on him hooting. Few on him silent on his perch even. Yet cut away the woods never so much year after year, though the chopper has not seen him and only a grove or two is left, still his aboriginal voice is heard indefinitely far and sweet, mingled oft, in strange harmony, with the newly invented din of trade, like a sentence of Allegri sounded in our streets, — hooting from invisible perch at his foes the woodchoppers, who are invading his domains. As the earth only a few inches beneath the surface is undisturbed and what it was anciently, so are heard still some primeval sounds in the air. Some of my townsmen I never see, and of a great proportion I do not hear the voices in a year, though they live within my horizon; but every week almost I hear the loud voice of the hooting owl, though I do not see the bird more than once in ten years.

I perceive that more or other things are seen in the reflection than in the substance. As I look now over the pond westward, I see in substance the now bare outline of Fair Haven Hill a mile beyond, but in the reflection I see not this, only the tops of some pines, which stand close to the shore but are invisible against

the dark hill beyond, and these are indefinitely prolonged into points of shadow.

The sun is set, and over the valley, which looks like an outlet of Walden toward Fair Haven, I see a burnished bar of cloud stretched low and level, as if it were the bar over that passageway to Elysium, the last column in the train of the sun.

When I get as far as my bean-field, the reflected white in the winter horizon of this perfectly cloudless sky is being condensed at the horizon's edge, and its hue deepening into a dun golden, against which the tops of the trees — pines and elms — are seen with beautiful distinctness, and a slight blush begins to suffuse the eastern horizon, and so the picture of the day is done and set in a gilded frame.

Such is a winter eve. Now for a merry fire, some old poet's pages, or else serene philosophy, or even a healthy book of travels, to last far into the night, eked out perhaps with the walnuts which we gathered in November.

The worker who would accomplish much these short days must shear a dusky slice off both ends of the night. The chopper must work as long as he can see, often returning home by moonlight, and set out for the woods again by candle-light.

In many parts of the river the ice has been formed with remarkably coarse crystallization, the surface being starred with great raised rays as thick as your thumb and several feet long, as it were the beginning of a bony

system, as if under the action of a strong wind which rippled the water while it was freezing. All covered with these rounded plaits. Soon, where there is much current, even in pretty cold weather, the ice is worn thin during the day, and when you are following the tracks of one who has preceded you by half a dozen hours over the black ice, you are surprised by seeing the trembling water reveal itself at numerous holes otherwise not noticeable close about you.

The northwest wind, meeting the current in an exposed place, produces that hobbly ice which I described at Cardinal Shore day before yesterday. This is the case in this place every year, and no doubt this same phenomenon occurred annually at this point on this river a thousand years before America was discovered. This regularity and permanence make these phenomena more interesting to me.

Dec. 10. A fine, clear, cold winter morning, with a small leaf frost on trees, etc. The thermometer at 7.15 and at 7.30 3°. Going to the post-office at the former hour, I notice those level bars, as it were, of frozen mist against the Walden wood. When I return, the sun is rising and the smokes from the chimneys, which slant from northwest to southeast, though it seems quite still, blush like sunset clouds.

It is remarkable how suggestive the slightest drawing as a memento of things seen. For a few years past I have been accustomed to make a rude sketch in my journal of plants, ice, and various natural phenomena, and though the fullest accompanying description may

fail to recall my experience, these rude outline drawings do not fail to carry me back to that time and scene. It is as if I saw the same thing again, and I may again attempt to describe it in words if I choose.

Yesterday I walked under the murderous Lincoln Bridge, where at least ten men have been swept dead from the cars within as many years. I looked to see if their heads had indented the bridge, if there were sturdy blows given as well as received, and if their brains lay about. But I could see neither the one nor the other. The bridge is quite uninjured, even, and straight, not even the paint worn off or discolored. The ground is clean, the snow spotless, and the place looks as innocent as a bank whereon the wild thyme grows. It does its work in an artistic manner. We have another bridge of exactly the same character on the other side of the town, which has killed one, at least, to my knowledge. Surely the approaches to our town are well guarded. These are our modern Dragons of Wantley. Boucaniers of the Fitchburg Railroad, they lie in wait at the narrow passes and decimate the employees. The Company has signed a bond to give up one employee at this pass annually. The Vermont mother commits her son to their charge, and when she asks for him, again the Directors say: "I am not your son's keeper. Go look beneath the ribs of the Lincoln Bridge." It is a monster which would not have minded Perseus with his Medusa's head. If he could be held back only four feet from where he now crouches, all travellers might pass in safety and laugh him to scorn. This would require but a little resolution in our legis-

lature, but it is preferred to pay tribute still. I felt a curiosity to see this famous bridge, naturally far greater than my curiosity to see the gallows on which Smith was hung, which was burned in the old court-house, for the exploits of this bridge are ten times as memorable. Here they are killed without priest, and the bridge, unlike the gallows, is a fixture. Besides, the gallows bears an ill name, and I think deservedly. No doubt it has hung many an innocent man, but this Lincoln Bridge, long as it has been in our midst and busy as it has been, no legislature, nobody, indeed, has ever seriously complained of, unless it was some bereaved mother, who was naturally prejudiced against it. To my surprise, I found no difficulty in getting a sight of it. It stands right out in broad daylight in the midst of the fields. No sentinels, no spiked fence, no crowd about it, and you have to pay no fee for looking at it. It is perfectly simple and easy to construct, and does its work silently. The days of the gallows are numbered. The next time this county has a Smith to dispose of, they have only to hire him out to the Fitchburg Railroad Company. Let the priest accompany him to the freight-train, pray with him, and take leave of him there. Another advantage I have hinted at, an advantage to the morals of the community, that, strange as it may seem, no crowd ever assembles at this spot; there are no morbidly curious persons, no hardened reprobates, no masculine women, no anatomists there.

Does it not make life more serious? I feel as if these were stirring times, as good as the days of the Crusaders, the Northmen, or the Boucaniers.

Gathered this afternoon quite a parcel of walnuts on the hill. It has not been better picking this season there. They lie on the snow, or rather sunk an inch or two into it. And some trees hang quite full.[1] See the squirrel-tracks leading straight from tree to tree.

It has been a warm, clear, glorious winter day, the air full of that peculiar vapor. How short the afternoons! I hardly get out a couple of miles before the sun is setting. The nights are light on account of the snow, and, there being a moon, there is no distinct interval between the day and night. I see the sun set from the side of Nawshawtuct, and make haste to the post-office with the red sky over my shoulder. When the mail is distributed and I come forth into the street on my return, the apparently full moon has fairly commenced her reign, and I go home by her light.

Bradford, in his "History of the Plymouth Plantation," written between 1630 and 1650, uses, on page 235, the word "kilter," speaking of guns being out of kilter, proving that this is an old word; yet it is not in my dictionaries.

Dec. 11. Minott tells me that his and his sister's wood-lot together contains about ten acres and has, with a very slight exception at one time, supplied all their fuel for thirty years, and he thinks would constantly continue to do so. They keep one fire all the time, and two some of the time, and burn about eight cords in a year. He knows his wood-lot and what grows

[1] So, too, the shagbarks hang on the trees on the Souhegan, where they have not been gathered.

in it as well as an ordinary farmer does his corn-field, for he has cut his own wood till within two or three years; knows the history of every stump on it and the age of every sapling; knows how many beech trees and black birches there are there, as another knows his pear or cherry trees. He complains that the choppers make a very long carf nowadays, doing most of the cutting on one side, to avoid changing hands so much. It is more economical, as well as more poetical, to have a wood-lot and cut and get out your own wood from year to year than to buy it at your door. Minott may say to his trees: "Submit to my axe. I cut your father on this very spot." How many sweet passages there must have been in his life there, chopping all alone in the short winter days! How many rabbits, partridges, foxes he saw! A rill runs through the lot, where he quenched his thirst, and several times he has laid it bare. At last rheumatism has made him a prisoner, and he is compelled to let a stranger, a vandal, it may be, go into his lot with an axe. It is fit that he should be buried there.

Dec. 12. Wonderful, wonderful is our life and that of our companions! That there should be such a thing as a brute animal, not human! and that it should attain to a sort of society with our race! Think of cats, for instance. They are neither Chinese nor Tartars. They do not go to school, nor read the Testament; yet how near they come to doing so! how much they are like us who do so! What sort of philosophers are we, who know absolutely nothing of the origin and des-

tiny of cats? At length, without having solved any of these problems, we fatten and kill and eat some of our cousins!

As soon as the snow came, I naturally began to observe that portion of the plants that was left above the snow, not only the weeds but the withered leaves, which before had been confounded with the russet earth. Yesterday afternoon, after a misty forenoon, it began to rain by degrees, and in the course of the night more than half the snow has disappeared, revealing the ground here and there; and already the brown weeds and leaves attract me less.

This morning it is fair again.

P. M. — To Saw Mill Brook and back by Red Choke-berry Path and Walden.

Large oaks in thick woods have not so many leaves on them as in pastures, methinks (?). At the wall between Saw Mill Brook Falls and Red Choke-berry Path, I see where a great many chestnut burs have been recently chewed up fine by the squirrels, to come at the nuts. The wall for half a dozen rods and the snow are covered with them. You can see where they have dug the burs out of the snow, and then sat on a rock or the wall and gnawed them in pieces. I, too, dig many burs out of the snow with my foot, and though many of *these* nuts are softened and discolored they have a peculiarly sweet and agreeable taste.

Yesterday morning I noticed that several people were having their pigs killed, not foreseeing the thaw. Such warm weather as this the animal heat will hardly get out before night. I saw Peter, the dexterous pig-butcher,

busy in two or three places, and in the afternoon I saw him with washed hands and knives in sheath and his leather overalls drawn off, going to his solitary house on the edge of the Great Fields, carrying in the rain a piece of the pork he had slaughtered, with a string put through it. Often he carries home the head, which is less prized, taking his pay thus in kind, and these supplies do not come amiss to his outcast family.

I saw Lynch's dog stealthily feeding at a half of his master's pig, which lay dressed on a wheelbarrow at the door. A little yellow-brown dog, with fore feet braced on the ice and outstretched neck, he eagerly browsed along the edge of the meat, half a foot to right and left, with incessant short and rapid snatches, which brought it away as readily as if it had been pudding. He evidently knew very well that he was stealing, but made the most of his time. The little brown dog weighed a pound or two more afterward than before.

Where is the great natural-historian? Is he a butcher, or the patron of butchers? As well look for a great anthropologist among cannibals, New-Zealanders.

Dec. 13. P. M. — To Hill and round by J. Hosmer woodland and Lee house.

I see some of those great andromeda puffs still hanging on the twigs behind Assabet Spring, black and shrivelled bags. The river is generally open again. The snow is mostly gone. In many places it is washed away down to the channels made by the mice, branching galleries. I go through the lot where Wheeler's Irishmen cut last winter. Though they changed hands, they did not

cut twice in a place, and the stump, instead of having a smooth surface, is roughly hacked.

There is a fine healthy and handsome scarlet oak between Muhlenbergii Brook and the Assabet River watering-place, in the open land. It is about thirty-five feet high and spreads twenty-five, perfectly regular. It is very full of leaves, excepting a crescent of bare twigs at the summit about three feet wide in the middle. The leaves have a little redness in them.

There is a dense growth of young birches from the seed in the sprout-land lot just beyond on the riverside, now apparently two or three years old, and they have a peculiar pink tint seen in the mass.

Dec. 14. This morning it begins to snow, and the ground is whitened again, but in an hour or two it turns to rain, and rains all the rest of the day. At night clears up, and in the night a strong and gusty northwest wind blows, which, by morning, —

Dec. 15, has dried up almost all the water in the road. It still blows hard at 2 P. M., but it is not cold.

3 P. M. — To Walden.

The high northwest wind of this morning, with what of cold we have, has made *some* of those peculiar rake-toothed icicles on the dead twigs, etc., about the edge of the pond at the east end. To produce this phenomenon is required only open water, a high wind, and sufficiently cold weather to freeze the spray. I observe B——'s boat left out at the pond, as last winter. When I see that a man neglects his boat thus, I do not wonder

that he fails in his business. It is not only shiftlessness or unthrift, but a sort of filthiness to let things go to wrack and ruin thus.

I still recall to mind that characteristic winter eve of December 9th; the cold, dry, and wholesome diet my mind and senses necessarily fed on, — oak leaves, bleached and withered weeds that rose above the snow, the now dark green of the pines, and perchance the faint metallic chip of a single tree sparrow; the hushed stillness of the wood at sundown, aye, all the winter day; the short boreal twilight; the smooth serenity and the reflections of the pond, still alone free from ice; the melodious hooting of the owl, heard at the same time with the yet more distant whistle of a locomotive, more aboriginal, and perchance more enduring here than that, heard above the voices of all the wise men of Concord, as if they were not (how little he is Anglicized!); the last strokes of the woodchopper, who presently bends his steps homeward; the gilded bar of cloud across the apparent outlet of the pond, conducting my thoughts into the eternal west; the deepening horizon glow; and the hasty walk homeward to enjoy the long winter evening. The hooting of the owl! That is a sound which my red predecessors heard here more than a thousand years ago. It rings far and wide, occupying the spaces rightfully, — grand, primeval, aboriginal sound. There is no whisper in it of the Buckleys, the Flints, the Hosmers who recently squatted here, nor of the first parish, nor of Concord Fight, nor of the last town meeting.

Mrs. Moody very properly calls eating nuts "a mouse-

like employment." It is quite too absorbing; you can't read at the same time, as when you are eating an apple.

Dec. 17. P. M. — Cold, with a piercing northwest wind and bare ground still. The river, which was raised by the rain of the 14th and ran partly over the meadows, is frozen over again, and I go along the edge of the meadow under Clamshell and back by Hubbard's Bridge.

At Clamshell, to my surprise, scare up either a woodcock or a snipe. I think the former, for I plainly saw considerable red on the breast, also a light stripe along the neck. It was feeding alone, close to the edge of the hill, where it is springy and still soft, almost the only place of this character in the neighborhood, and though I started it three times, it each time flew but little way, round to the hillside again, perhaps the same spot it had left a moment before, as if unwilling to leave this unfrozen and comparatively warm locality. It was a great surprise this bitter cold day, when so many springs were frozen up, to see this hardy bird loitering still. Once alighted, you could not see it till it arose again.

In Saw Mill Brook, as I crossed it, I saw the tail disappearing of some muskrat or other animal, flapping in the cold water, where all was ice around. A flock of a dozen or more tree sparrows flitting through the edge of the birches, etc., by the meadow front of Puffer's. They make excursions into the open meadow and, as I approach, take refuge in the brush. I hear their faint *cheep*, a very feeble evidence of their existence, and also a pretty little suppressed warbling from them.

To-day, though so cold, there is much of the frozen overflow, a broad border of it, along the meadow, a discolored yellowish and soft ice (it probably ran out yesterday or last night), the river still rising a little.

The wind is so cold and strong that the Indians that are encamped in three wigwams of cloth in the railroad wood-yard have all moved into two and closed them up tight.

That feeble *cheep* of the tree sparrow, like the tinkling of an icicle, or the chafing of two hard shrub oak twigs, is probably a call to their mates, by which they keep together. These birds, when perched, look larger than usual this cold and windy day; they are puffed up for warmth, have added a porch to their doors.

It is pretty poor picking out of doors to-day. There 's but little comfort to be found. You go stumping over bare frozen ground, sometimes clothed with curly yellowish withered grass like the back of half-starved cattle late in the fall, now beating this ear, now that, to keep them warm. It is comparatively summer-like under the south side of woods and hills.

When I returned from the South the other day, I was greeted by withered shrub oak leaves which I had not seen there. It was the most homely and agreeable object that met me. I found that I had no such friend as the shrub oak hereabouts. A farmer once asked me what shrub oaks were made for, not knowing any use they served. But I can tell him that they do me good. They are my parish ministers, regularly settled. They never did any man harm that I know.

Yesterday afternoon I was running a line through the

Shrub Oak Leaves

Today, though so cold, there is much of the frozen sparrow, a broad border of it, along the meadow, a discolored yellowish and soft ice (it probably ran out yesterday or last night), the river still rising a little.

The wind is so cold and strong that the Indians that are encamped in three wigwams of cloth in the railroad wood-yard have all moved into two and closed them up tight.

That feeble cheep of the tree sparrow, like the tinkling of an ewing, or the shading of two hard shrub oak twigs, is probably a call to their mates, by which they keep together. These birds, when perched, look larger than usual this cold and windy day; they are puffed up for warmth, have added a porch to their doors.

It is pretty poor picking out of doors to-day. There's but little comfort to be found. You go stamping over bare frozen ground, sometimes dotted with curly yellowish withered grass like the hair of half-starved cattle late in the fall, now beating this ear, now that, to keep them warm. It is comparatively summer-like under the south side of woods and hills.

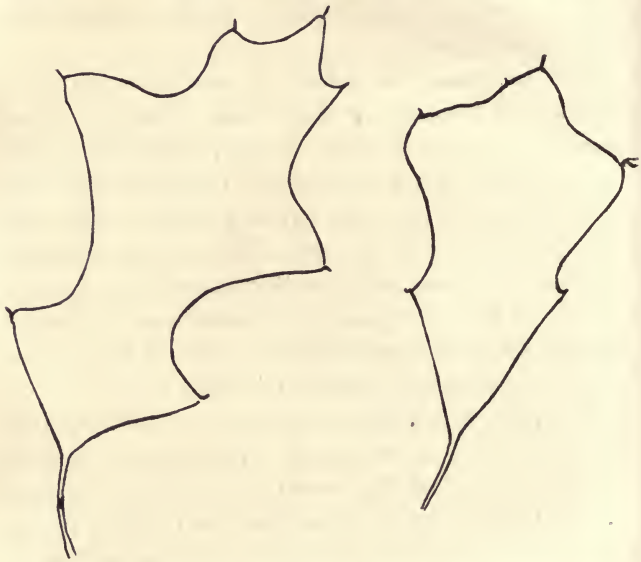
When I returned from the South the other day, I was greeted by withered shrub oak leaves which I had not seen them. It was the most homely and agreeable object that met me. I heard that I had no such friend as the shrub oak knowledge. A farmer once asked me what shrub oaks were made for, not knowing any use they served. But I can tell him that they do me good. They are my parish ministers, regularly settled. They never did any man harm that I know.

Yesterday afternoon I was running a line through the

woods. How many days have I spent thus, sighting my way in direct lines through dense woods, through cat-briar and viburnum in New Jersey, through shrub oak in New England, requiring my axeman to shear off twigs and bushes and dead limbs and masses of withered leaves that obstruct the view, and then set up a freshly barked stake exactly on the line; looking at these barked stakes from far and near as if I loved them; not knowing where I shall come out; my duty then and there perhaps merely to locate a straight line between two points.

Now you have the foliage of summer painted in brown. Go through the shrub oaks. All growth has ceased; no greenness meets the eye, except what there may be in the bark of this shrub. The green leaves are all turned to brown, quite dry and sapless. The little buds are sleeping at the base of the slender shrunken petioles. Who observed when they passed from green to brown? I do not remember the transition; it was very gradual. But these leaves still have a kind of life in them. They are exceedingly beautiful in their withered state. If they hang on, it is like the perseverance of the saints. Their colors are as wholesome, their forms as perfect, as ever. Now that the crowd and bustle of summer is passed, I have leisure to admire them. Their figures never weary my eye. Look at the few broad scallops in their sides. When was that pattern first cut? With what a free stroke the curve was struck! With how little, yet just enough, variety in their forms! Look at the fine bristles which arm each pointed lobe, as perfect now as when the wild bee hummed about them, or the chewink

scratched beneath them. What pleasing and harmonious colors within and without, above and below! The smooth, delicately brown-tanned upper surface, acorn-color, the very pale (some silvery or ashy) ribbed under side. How poetically, how like saints or innocent and beneficent beings, they give up the ghost! How spiritual! Though they have lost their sap, they have not given up the ghost. Rarely touched by worm or insect, they are as fair as ever. These are the forms of some: —



When was it ordained that this leaf should turn brown in the fall?

Dec. 18. 12 M. Start for Amherst, N. H.

A very cold day. Thermometer at 8 A. M. — 8° (and

I hear of others very much lower at an earlier hour), −2° at 11.45.

I find the first snow enough to whiten the ground beyond Littleton, and it deepens all the way to Amherst. The steam of the engine hugs the earth very close. Is it because it [is] a very clear, cold day?

The last half the route from Groton Junction to Nashua is along the Nashua River mostly. This river looks less interesting than the Concord. It appears even more open, *i. e.* less wooded (?). At any rate the banks are more uniform, and I notice none of our meadows on it. At Nashua, hire a horse and sleigh, and ride to Amherst, eleven miles, against a strong northwest wind, this bitter cold afternoon. When I get to South Merrimack, about 3.15 P. M., they tell me the thermometer is −3°. While the driving hand is getting benumbed, I am trying to warm the other against my body under the buffalo. Warm myself there in the shop of a tub and pail maker, who does his work by hand, splitting out the staves with a curved knife and smoothing them with curved shaves. His hoops are white ash, shaved thin. After entering Amherst territory, near the Souhegan, notice many shagbark trees, which they tell me the owners value as they do a good apple tree, getting a dozen bushels of shelled nuts sometimes from a tree. I see the nuts on some still.

At my lecture, the audience attended to me closely, and I was satisfied; that is all I ask or expect generally. Not one spoke to me afterward, nor needed they. I have no doubt that they liked it, in the main, though few of them would have dared say so, provided they were

conscious of it. Generally, if I can only get the ears of an audience, I do not care whether they say they like my lecture or not. I think I know as well as they can tell. At any rate, it is none of my business, and it would be impertinent for me to inquire. The stupidity of most of these country towns, not to include the cities, is in its innocence infantile. Lectured in basement (vestry) of the orthodox church, and I trust helped to undermine it.

I was told to stop at the U. S. Hotel, but an old inhabitant had never heard of it and could not tell me where to find it, but I found the letters on a sign without help. It was the ordinary unpretending (?) desolate-looking country tavern. The landlord apologized to me because there was to be a ball there that night which would keep me awake, and it did. He and others there, horrible to relate, were in the habit of blowing their noses with their fingers and wiping them on their boots! Champney's U. S. Hotel was an ordinary team tavern, and the letters U. S., properly enough, not very conspicuous on the sign.

A paper called the *Farmer's Cabinet* is published there. It has reached its fifty-fifth volume. I rode back to Nashua in the morning of —

Dec. 19. Knew the road by some yellow birch trees in a swamp and some rails set on end around a white oak in a pasture. These it seems were the objects I had noticed. In Nashua observed, as I thought, some elms in the distance which had been whitewashed. It turned out that they were covered from top to bottom, on one

side, with the frozen vapor from a fall on the canal. Walked a little way along the bank of the Merrimack, which was frozen over, and was agreeably reminded of my voyage up it. The night previous, in Amherst, I had been awaked by the loud cracking of the ground, which shook the house like the explosion of a powder-mill. In the morning there was to be seen a long crack across the road in front. I saw several of these here in Nashua, and ran a bit of stubble into them but in no place more than five inches. This is a sound peculiar to the coldest nights. Observed that the Nashua in Pepperell was frozen to the very edge of the fall, and even further in some places.

Got home at 1.30 P. M.

P. M. — To Walden.

Walden froze completely over last night. This is very sudden, for on the evening of the 15th there was not a particle of ice in it. In just three days, then, it has been completely frozen over, and the ice is now from two and a half to three inches thick, a transparent green ice, through which I see the bottom where it is seven or eight feet deep. I detect its thickness by looking at the cracks, which are already very numerous, but, having been made at different stages of the ice, they indicate very various thicknesses. Often one only an inch deep crosses at right angles another two and a half inches deep, the last having been recently made and indicating the real thickness of the ice. I advance confidently toward the middle, keeping within a few feet of some distinct crack two inches or more deep,

but when that fails me and I see only cracks an inch or an inch and a half deep, or none at all, I walk with great caution and timidity, though the ice may be as thick as ever, but I have no longer the means of determining its thickness. The ice is so transparent that it is too much like walking on water by faith.

The portion of the pond which was last frozen is a thinner and darker ice stretching about across the middle from southeast to northwest, *i. e.* from the shoulder of the Deep Cove to nearly midway between the bar and Ice-Fort Cove Cape. Close to the northwest end of this, there is a small and narrow place twenty feet long east and west, which is still so thin that a small stone makes a hole. The water, judging from my map, may[be] seventy or seventy-five feet deep there. It looks as if that had been the warmest place in the surface of the pond and therefore the last to yield to the frost king. Into this, or into the thinner ice at this point, there empties, as it were, a narrow meandering creek from near the western shore, which was nearly as late to freeze as any part. All this, I think, I have noticed in previous years. About the edge of all this more recent and darker ice, the thicker ice is white with a feathery frost, which seems to have been produced by the very fine spray, or rather the vapor, blown from the yet unfrozen surface on to the ice by the strong and cold wind. Here is where, so to speak, its last *animal heat* escaped, the dying breath of the pond frozen on its lips. It had the same origin with the frost about the mouth of a hole in the ground whence warm vapors had escaped. The fluid, timid pond was

encircled within an ever-narrowing circle by the icy grasp of winter, and this is a trace of the last vaporous breath that curled along its trembling surface. Here the chilled pond gave up the ghost.

As I stand here, I hear the hooting of my old acquaintance the owl in Wheeler's Wood. Do I not oftenest hear it just before sundown? This sound, heard near at hand, is more simply animal and guttural, without resonance or reverberation, but, heard here from out the depths of the wood, it sounds peculiarly hollow and drum-like, as if it struck on a tense skin drawn around, the tympanum of the wood, through which all we denizens of nature hear. Thus it comes to us an accredited and universal or melodious sound; is more than the voice of the owl, the voice of the wood as well. The owl only touches the stops, or rather wakes the reverberations. For all Nature is a musical instrument on which her creatures play, celebrating their joy or grief unconsciously often. It sounds now, *hoo* | *hoo hoo* (very fast) | *hoo-rer* | *hoo*.

Withered leaves! this is our frugal winter diet, instead of the juicy salads of spring and summer. I think I could write a lecture on "Dry Leaves," carrying a specimen of each kind that hangs on in the winter into the lecture-room as the heads of my discourse. They have long hung to some extent in vain, and have not found their poet yet. The pine has been sung, but not, to my knowledge, the shrub oak. Most think it is useless. How glad I am that it serves no vulgar use! It is never seen on the woodman's cart. The citizen who has just bought a sprout-land on which shrub oaks alone come

up only curses it. But it serves a higher use than they know. Shrub oak! how true its name! Think first what a family it belongs to. The oak, the king of trees, is its own brother, only of ampler dimensions. The oaks, so famous for grandeur and picturesqueness, so prized for strength by the builder, for knees or for beams; and this is the oak of smaller size, the Esquimau of oaks, the shrub oak! The oaken shrub! I value it first for the noble family it belongs to. It is not like brittle sumach or venomous dogwood, which you must beware how you touch, but wholesome to the touch, though rough; not producing any festering sores, only honest scratches and rents.

Dr. Kane says in his "Arctic Explorations," page 21, that at Fiskernaes in Greenland "the springs, which well through the mosses, frequently remain unfrozen throughout the year."

Dec. 20. Rain more or less all day.

Dec. 21. *Sunday.* Think what a pitiful kind of life ours is, eating our kindred animals! and in some places one another! Some of us (the Esquimaux), half whose life is spent in the dark, wholly dependent on one or two animals not many degrees removed from themselves for food, clothing, and fuel, and partly for shelter; making their sledges "of small fragments of porous bones [of whale],[1] admirably knit together by thongs of hide" (Kane's last book, vol. i, page 205), thus getting about, sliding about, on the bones of our cousins.

[1] [Supplied by Thoreau.]

Where Kane wintered in the Advance in 1853–54, on the coast of Greenland, about 78½° north latitude, or further north than any navigator had been excepting Parry at Spitzbergen, he meets with Esquimaux, and "the fleam-shaped tips of their lances were of unmistakable steel." "The metal was obtained in traffic from the more southern tribes." Such is trade.

P. M. — To Walden.

The pond is open again *in the middle*, owing to the rain of yesterday. I go across to the cliffs by way of the Andromeda Ponds.

How interesting and wholesome their color now! A broad level thick stuff, without a crevice in it, composed of the dull brown-red andromeda. Is it not the most uniform and deepest red that covers a large surface now? No withered oak leaves are nearly as red at present. In a broad hollow amid the hills, you have this perfectly level red stuff, marked here and there only with gray streaks or patches of bare high blueberry bushes, etc., and all surrounded by a light border of straw-colored sedge, etc.

Even the little red buds of the *Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum* and *vacillans* on the now bare and dry-looking stems attract me as I go through the open glades between the first Andromeda Pond and the Well Meadow Field. Many twigs of the *Vaccinium vacillans* appear to have been nibbled off, and some of its *buds have unfolded*, apparently in the fall. I observe sage willows with many leaves on them still.

Apparently the red oak retains much fewer leaves than the white, scarlet, and black. I notice the petioles of

both the black and red twisted in that peculiar way. The red oak leaves look thinner and flatter, and therefore perhaps show the lobes more, than those of the black. The white oak leaves are the palest and most shrivelled, the lightest, perhaps a shade of buff, but they are of various shades, some pretty dark with a salmon tinge. The swamp white oak leaves (which I am surprised to find Gray makes a variety (*discolor*) of the *Quercus Prinus*) are very much like the shrub oak, but more curled. These two are the best preserved, though they do not hang on so well as the white and scarlet. Both remarkable for their thick, leathery, sound leaves, uninjured by insects, and their very light downy under sides. The black oak leaves are the darkest brown, with clear or deep yellowish-brown under sides, obovate in outline. The scarlet oak leaves, which are very numerous still, are of a ruddy color, having much blood in their cheeks. They are all winter the reddest on the hillsides. They still spread their ruddy fingers to the breeze. After the shrub and swamp white, they are perhaps the best preserved of any I describe. The red oak leaves are a little lighter brown than the black oak, less yellowish beneath. Their lobes, methinks, are narrower and straighter-sided. They are the color of their own acorns.

Dec. 22. To Boston and Cambridge.

Dec. 23. Some savage tribes must share the experience of the lower animals in their relation to man. With what thoughts must the Esquimau manufacture

his knife from the rusty hoop of a cask drifted to his shores, not a natural but an artificial product, the work of man's hands, the waste of the commerce of a superior race, whom perchance he never saw!

The cracking of the ground is a phenomenon of the coldest nights. After being awaked by the loud cracks the night of the 18th at Amherst (a man told me in the morning that he had seen a crack running across the plain (I saw it), almost broad enough to put his hand into; this was an exaggeration; it was not a quarter of an inch wide), I saw a great many the same forenoon running across the road in Nashua, every few rods, and also by our house in Concord the same day when I got home. So it seems the ground was cracking all the country over, partly, no doubt, because there was so little snow, or none (none at Concord).

If the writer would interest readers, he must report so much life, using a certain satisfaction always as a *point d'appui*. However mean and limited, it must be a genuine and contented life that he speaks out of. They must have the essence or oil of himself, tried out of the fat of his experience and joy.[1]

P. M. — Surveying for Cyrus Jarvis.

Snows more or less all day, making an inch or two.

Dec. 24. More snow in the night and to-day, making nine or ten inches.

P. M. — To Walden and Baker Farm with Ricketson, it still snowing a little.

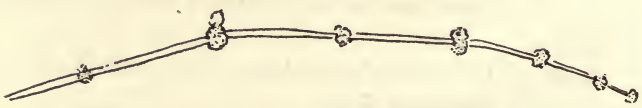
Turned off from railroad and went through Wheeler,

[1] [Channing, p. 97.]

or Owl, Wood. The snow is very light, so that sleighs cut through it, and there is but little sleighing. It is very handsome now on the trees by the main path in Wheeler Wood; also on the weeds and twigs that rise above the snow, resting on them just like down, light towers of down with the bare extremity of the twig peeping out above. We push through the light dust, throwing it before our legs as a husbandman grain which he is sowing. It is only in still paths in the woods that it rests on the trees much. Am surprised to find Walden still open in the middle. When I push aside the snow with my feet, the ice appears quite black by contrast. There is considerable snow on the edge of the pine woods where I used to live. It rests on the successive tiers of boughs, perhaps weighing them down, so that the trees are opened into great flakes from top to bottom. The snow collects and is piled up in little columns like down about every twig and stem, and this is only seen in perfection, complete to the last flake, while it is snowing, as now.

Returned across the pond and went across to Baker Farm.

Noticed, at east end of westernmost Andromeda Pond, the slender spikes of lycopus with half a dozen



distant little spherical dark-brown whorls of pungently fragrant or spicy seeds, somewhat nutmeg-like, or even

like flagroot (?), when bruised. I am not sure that the seeds of any other mint are thus fragrant now. It scents your handkerchief or pocketbook finely when the crumbled whorls are sprinkled over them.

It was very pleasant walking thus before the storm was over, in the soft, subdued light. We are also more domesticated in nature when our vision is confined to near and familiar objects. Did not see a track of any animal till returning near the Well Meadow Field, where many foxes (?), one of whom I had a glimpse of, had been coursing back and forth in the path and near it for three quarters of a mile. They had made quite a path.

I do not take snuff. In my winter walks, I stoop and bruise between my thumb and finger the dry whorls of the lycopus, or water horehound, just rising above the snow, stripping them off, and smell that. That is as near as I come to the Spice Islands. That is my smelling-bottle, my ointment.[1]

Dec. 25. P. M. — To Lee's Cliff.

A strong wind from the northwest is gathering the snow into picturesque drifts behind the walls. As usual they resemble shells more than anything, sometimes prows of vessels, also the folds of a white napkin or counterpane dropped over a bonneted head. There are no such picturesque snow-drifts as are formed behind loose and open stone walls. Already yesterday it had drifted so much, *i. e.* so much ground was bare, that there were as many carts as sleighs in the streets.

[1] [*Daniel Ricketson and his Friends*, pp. 348–350.]

Just beyond Hubbard's Bridge, on Conant's Brook Meadow, I am surprised to find a tract of ice, some thirty by seven or eight rods, blown quite bare. It shows how unstable the snow is.

Sanborn got some white spruce and some usnea for Christmas in the swamp. I thought the last would be the most interesting and *weird.*

On the north sides of the walls we go over boots and get them full, then let ourselves down into the shell-work on the south side; so beyond the brows of hills.

At Lee's Cliff I pushed aside the snow with my foot and got some fresh green catnip for Min.

I see the numerous tracks there, too, of foxes, or else hares, that have been running about in the light snow.

Called at the Conantum House. It grieves me to see these interesting relics, this and the house at the Baker Farm, going to complete ruin.

Met William Wheeler's shaggy gray terrier, or Indian dog, going home. He got out of the road into the field and went round to avoid us.

Take long walks in stormy weather or through deep snows in the fields and woods, if you would keep your spirits up. Deal with brute nature. Be cold and hungry and weary.

Dec. 27. *Saturday.* Walden is still open in one place of considerable extent, just off the east cape of long southern bay.

Dec. 28. *Sunday.* Am surprised to see the *F. hyemalis* here.

Walden completely frozen over again last night. Goodwin & Co. are fishing there to-day. Ice about four inches thick, occasionally sunk by the snow beneath the water. They have had but poor luck. One middling-sized pickerel and one large yellow perch only, since 9 or 10 A. M. It is now nearly sundown. The perch is very full of spawn. How handsome, with its broad dark transverse bars, sharp narrow triangles, broadest on the back!

The men are standing or sitting about a smoky fire of damp dead wood, near by the spot where many a fisherman has sat before, and I draw near, hoping to hear a fish story. One says that Louis Menan, the French Canadian who lives in Lincoln, fed his ducks on the fresh-water clams which he got at Fair Haven Pond. He saw him open the shells, and the ducks snapped them up out of the shells very fast.

I observe that some shrub oak leaves have but little silveriness beneath, as if they were a variety, the color of the under approaching that of the upper surface somewhat.

Since the snow of the 23d, the days seem considerably lengthened, owing to the increased light after sundown.

The fishermen sit by their damp fire of rotten pine wood, so wet and chilly that even smoke in their eyes is a kind of comfort. There they sit, ever and anon scanning their reels to see if any have fallen, and, if not catching many fish, still getting what they went for, though they may not be aware of it, *i. e.* a wilder experience than the town affords.

There lies a pickerel or perch on the ice, waving a fin

or lifting its gills from time to time, gasping its life away.

I thrive best on solitude. If I have had a companion only one day in a week, unless it were one or two I could name, I find that the value of the week to me has been seriously affected. It dissipates my days, and often it takes me another week to get over it. As the Esquimaux of Smith's Strait in North Greenland laughed when Kane warned them of their utter extermination, cut off as they were by ice on all sides from their race, unless they attempted in season to cross the glacier southward, so do I laugh when you tell me of the danger of impoverishing myself by isolation. It is here that the walrus and the seal, and the white bear, and the eider ducks and auks on which I batten, most abound.

Dec. 29. The snow is softened yet more, and it thaws somewhat. The cockerels crow, and we are reminded of spring.

P. M. — To Warren Miles's mill.

We must go out and re-ally ourselves to Nature every day. We must make root, send out some little fibre at least, even every winter day. I am sensible that I am imbibing health when I open my mouth to the wind. Staying in the house breeds a sort of insanity always. Every house is in this sense a hospital. A night and a forenoon is as much confinement to those wards as I can stand. I am aware that I recover some sanity which I had lost almost the instant that I come abroad.

Do not the *F. hyemalis*, lingering yet, and the *numerous* tree sparrows foretell an open winter?

The fields behind Dennis's have but little snow on them; the weeds rising above it imbrown them. It is collected in deep banks on the southeast slopes of the hills, — the wind having been northwest, — and there no weeds rise above it.

By Nut Meadow Brook, just beyond Brown's fence crossing, I see a hornets' nest about seven inches in diameter on a thorn bush, only eighteen inches from the ground. Do they ever return to the same nests?

White oaks standing in open ground will commonly have more leaves now than black or red oaks of the same size, also standing exposed.

Miles is sawing pail-stuff. Thus the full streams and ponds supply the farmer with winter work. I see two trout four or five inches long in his brook a few rods below the mill. The water is quite low, he having shut it off. Rich copper-brown fish darting up and down the fast-shoaling stream.

When I return by Clamshell Hill, the sun has set, and the cloudy sky is reflected in a short and narrow open reach at the bend there. The water and reflected sky are a dull, dark green, but not the real sky.

Dec. 30. Surveying the W—— farm.

Parker, the Shaker that was, my assistant, says that the first year he came to live with W——, he worked on the farm, and that when he was digging potatoes on that jog (of about an acre) next to the site of the old Lee house, he found snakes' eggs in many hills, perhaps half a dozen together, he thinks as many as seventy in all. He did not perceive that they were united as he

hoed them out, but may have separated them. When he broke the eggs, the young snakes, two or three inches long, wriggled out and about.

Had the experience of losing a pin and then hunting for it a long time in vain.

What an evidence it is, after all, of civilization, or of a capacity for improvement, that savages like our Indians, who in their protracted wars stealthily slay men, women, and children without mercy, with delight, who delight to burn, torture, and devour one another, proving themselves more inhuman in these respects even than beasts, — what a wonderful evidence it is, I say, of their capacity for improvement that even they can enter into the most formal compact or treaty of peace, burying the hatchet, etc., etc., and treating with each other with as much consideration as the most enlightened states. You would say that they had a genius for diplomacy as well as for war. Consider that Iroquois, torturing his captive, roasting him before a slow fire, biting off the fingers of him alive, and finally eating the heart of him dead, betraying not the slightest evidence of humanity; and now behold him in the council-chamber, where he meets the representatives of the hostile nation to treat of peace, conducting with such perfect dignity and decorum, betraying such a sense of justness. These savages are equal to us civilized men in their treaties, and, I fear, not essentially worse in their wars.

VI

JANUARY, 1857

(ÆT. 39)

Jan. 1. I observe a shelf of ice — what arctic voyagers call the ice-belt or ice-foot (which they see on a very great scale sledging upon it) — adhering to the walls and banks at various heights, the river having fallen nearly two feet since it first froze. It is often two or three feet wide and now six inches thick.

Am still surveying the W—— or Lee farm. W—— cleared out and left this faithful servant like a cat in some corner of this great house, but without enough to buy him a pair of boots, I hear. Parker was once a Shaker at Canterbury. He is now Captain E——'s right-hand man. He found him in the house. P. does the chores. Complains that, as they dine at fashionable hours, he does n't get enough to support him when he goes home at noon from helping me. When he sees how much dead wood there is on the farm, he says they ought to have a "gundalo," meaning a large, square kind of boat, to cart it off with.

E——, having lent W—— money, was obliged to take the farm to save himself, but he is nearly blind, and is anxious to get rid of it. Says that the buildings are either new or in excellent repair. He understands that in W——'s day they mixed paint by the hogshead. Parker

has told him of logs cut two years ago which lie rotting in the swamp, and he is having them hauled out and to mill.

Jan. 2. To-day I see Parker is out with horse and cart, collecting dead wood at the Rock and drawing it home over the meadow. I saw the English servant-girl with one of the children flat on the ice hard at work on the river cutting a hole with a hatchet, but, as the ice was thick and the water gushed up too soon for her, I saw that she would fail and directed her to an open place. She was nearly beat out. The hole, she said, was to drown a cat in; probably one which the W——s left behind as they did Parker. E—— is resolved on a general clearing-up.

It is singular that the nuthatch and the creeper should be so rare, they are so regular.

Jan. 3. Snows all day, falling level, without wind, a moist and heavy snow. Snowed part of the night also. But to my surprise a high wind arose in the night and that and the cold so dried the snow that —

(*Jan.* 4) this morning it is a good deal drifted. It did not freeze together, or crust, as you might have expected. You would not suppose it had been moist when it fell. About eight inches have fallen, yet there is very little on the river. It blows off, unless where water has oozed out at the sides or elsewhere, and the rough, flowing, scaly mass is frozen into a kind of batter, like mortar, or bread that has spewed out in

the oven. Deep and drifted as the snow is, I found, when I returned from my walk, some dry burs of the burdock adhering to the lining of my coat. Even in the middle of winter, aye, in middle of the Great Snow, Nature does not forget these her vegetable economies.

It does look sometimes as if the world were on its last legs. How many there are whose principal employment it is nowadays to eat their meals and go to the post-office!

After spending four or five days surveying and drawing a plan incessantly, I especially feel the necessity of putting myself in communication with nature again, to recover my tone, to withdraw out of the wearying and unprofitable world of affairs. The things I have been doing have but a fleeting and accidental importance, however much men are immersed in them, and yield very little valuable fruit. I would fain have been wading through the woods and fields and conversing with the sane snow. Having waded in the very shallowest stream of time, I would now bathe my temples in eternity. I wish again to participate in the serenity of nature, to share the happiness of the river and the woods. I thus from time to time break off my connection with eternal truths and go with the shallow stream of human affairs, grinding at the mill of the Philistines; but when my task is done, with never-failing confidence I devote myself to the infinite again. It would be sweet to deal with men more, I can imagine, but where dwell they? Not in the fields which I traverse.

Jan. 5. A cold, cutting northwest wind.

Jan. 6. Still colder and perhaps windier. The river is now for the most part covered with snow again, which has blown from the meadows and been held by the water which has oozed out. I slump through snow into that water for twenty rods together, which is not frozen though the thermometer says −8°. I think that the bright-yellow wood of the barberry, which I have occasion to break in my surveying, is the most interesting and remarkable for its color of any. When I get home after that slumping walk on the river, I find that the slush has balled and frozen on my boots two or three inches thick, and can only be thawed off by the fire, it is so solid.

I frequently have occasion in surveying to note the position or bearing of the edge of a wood, which I describe as edge of wood. In such a way apparently the name Edgewood originated.

Beatton, the old Scotch storekeeper, used to say of one Deacon (Joe?) Brown, a grandfather of the milkman, who used to dine at his house on Sundays and praise his wife's dinners but yet prevented her being admitted to the church, that his was like a "coo's (cow's) tongue, rough one side and smooth the other."

A man asked me the other night whether such and such persons were not as happy as anybody, being conscious, as I perceived, of much unhappiness himself and not aspiring to much more than an animal content. "Why!" said I, speaking to his condition, "the stones are happy, Concord River is happy, and I am happy too. When I took up a fragment of a walnut-shell

this morning, I saw by its very grain and composition, its form and color, etc., that it was made for happiness. The most brutish and inanimate objects that are made suggest an everlasting and thorough satisfaction; they are the homes of content. Wood, earth, mould, etc., exist for joy. Do you think that Concord River would have continued to flow these millions of years by Clamshell Hill and round Hunt's Island, if it had not been happy, — if it had been miserable in its channel, tired of existence, and cursing its maker and the hour that it sprang?"

Though there is an extremely cold, cutting northwest wind, against which I see many travellers turning their backs, and so advancing, I hear and see an unusual number of merry little tree sparrows about the few weeds that are to be seen. They look very chipper, flitting restlessly about and jerking their long tails.

Jan. 7. P. M. — To Walden down railroad and return over Cliffs.

I should not be ashamed to have a shrub oak for my coat-of-arms.

It is bitter cold, with a cutting northwest wind. The pond is now a plain snow-field, but there are no tracks of fishers on it. It is too cold for them. The surface of the snow there is finely waved and grained, giving it a sort of slaty fracture, the appearance which hard, dry *blown* snow assumes. All animate things are reduced to their lowest terms. This is the fifth day of cold, blowing weather. All tracks are concealed in an hour or two. Some have to make their paths two or three times

over in a day. The fisherman is not here, for his lines would freeze in.

I go through the woods toward the Cliffs along the side of the Well Meadow Field.

There is nothing so sanative, so poetic, as a walk in the woods and fields even now, when I meet none abroad for pleasure. Nothing so inspires me and excites such serene and profitable thought. The objects are elevating. In the street and in society I am almost invariably cheap and dissipated, my life is unspeakably mean. No amount of gold or respectability would in the least redeem it, — dining with the Governor or a member of Congress!! But alone in distant woods or fields, in unpretending sprout-lands or pastures tracked by rabbits, even in a bleak and, to most, cheerless day, like this, when a villager would be thinking of his inn, I come to myself, I once more feel myself grandly related, and that cold and solitude are friends of mine. I suppose that this value, in my case, is equivalent to what others get by churchgoing and prayer. I come to my solitary woodland walk as the homesick go home. I thus dispose of the superfluous and see things as they are, grand and beautiful. I have told many that I walk every day about half the daylight, but I think they do not believe it. I wish to get the Concord, the Massachusetts, the America, out of my head and be sane a part of every day. If there are missionaries for the heathen, why not send them to me? I wish to know something; I wish to be made better. I wish to forget, a considerable part of every day, all mean, narrow, trivial men (and this requires usually to forego and forget

all personal relations so long), and therefore I come out to these solitudes, where the problem of existence is simplified. I get away a mile or two from the town into the stillness and solitude of nature, with rocks, trees, weeds, snow about me. I enter some glade in the woods, perchance, where a few weeds and dry leaves alone lift themselves above the surface of the snow, and it is as if I had come to an open window. I see out and around myself. Our *skylights* are thus far away from the ordinary resorts of men. I am not satisfied with ordinary windows. I must have a true *skylight*. My true skylight is on the outside of the village. I am not thus expanded, recreated, enlightened, when I meet a company of men. It chances that the sociable, the town and county, or the farmers' club does not prove a skylight to me. I do not invariably find myself translated under those circumstances. They bore me. The man I meet with is not often so instructive as the silence he breaks. This stillness, solitude, wildness of nature is a kind of thoroughwort, or boneset, to my intellect. This is what I go out to seek. It is as if I always met in those places some grand, serene, immortal, infinitely encouraging, though invisible, companion, and walked with him. There at last my nerves are steadied, my senses and my mind do their office. I am aware that most of my neighbors would think it a hardship to be compelled to linger here one hour, especially this bleak day, and yet I receive this sweet and ineffable compensation for it. It is the most agreeable thing I do. Truly, my coins are uncurrent with them.

I love and celebrate nature, even in detail, merely

because I love the scenery of these interviews and translations. I love to remember every creature that was at this *club*. I thus get off a certain social scurf and scaliness. I do not consider the other animals brutes in the common sense. I am attracted toward them undoubtedly because I never heard any nonsense from them. I have not convicted them of folly, or vanity, or pomposity, or stupidity, in dealing with me. Their vices, at any rate, do not interfere with me. My fairies invariably take to flight when a man appears upon the scene. In a caucus, a meeting-house, a lyceum, a club-room, there is nothing like it in my experience. But away out of the town, on Brown's scrub oak lot, which was sold the other day for six dollars an acre, I have company such as England cannot buy, nor afford. This society is what I live, what I survey, for. I subscribe generously to *this* — all that I have and am.

There, in that Well Meadow Field, perhaps, I feel in my element again, as when a fish is put back into the water. I wash off all my chagrins. All things go smoothly as the axle of the universe. I can remember that when I was very young I used to have a dream night after night, over and over again, which might have been named Rough and Smooth. All existence, all satisfaction and dissatisfaction, all event was symbolized in this way. Now I seemed to be lying and tossing, perchance, on a horrible, a fatal rough surface, which must soon, indeed, put an end to my existence, though even in the dream I knew it to be the symbol merely of my misery; and then again, suddenly, I was lying on a delicious smooth surface, as of a summer sea,

as of gossamer or down or softest plush, and life was such a luxury to live. My waking experience *always* has been and is such an alternate Rough and Smooth. In other words it is Insanity and Sanity.

Might I aspire to praise the moderate nymph Nature! I must be like her, moderate.[1]

This snow which fell last Saturday so moist and heavy is now surprisingly dry and light and powdery. In the wood-path between the Well Meadow Field and the Cliff, it is all scored with the tracks of leaves that have scurried over it. Some might not suspect the cause of these fine and delicate traces, for the cause is no longer obvious. Here and there is but a leaf or two to be seen in the snow-covered path. The myriads which scampered here are now at rest perhaps far on one side. I have listened to the whispering of the dry leaves so long that whatever meaning it has for my ears, I think that I must have heard it.

On the top of the Cliff I am again exposed to the cutting wind. It has blown the hilltops almost bare, and the snow is packed in hard drifts, in long ridges or coarse folds, behind the walls there. Fine, dry snow, thus blown, will become hard enough to bear. Especially the flat rocks are bared, the snow having nothing to hold by.

Going down path to the spring, I see where some fox (apparently) has passed down it, and though the rest of the broad path is else perfectly unspotted white, each track of the fox has proved a trap which has caught from three or four to eight or ten leaves each, snugly packed; and thus it is reprinted.

[1] [Channing, p. 113.]

Jan. 8. I find by hanging Smith's thermometer on the same nail with ours that it stands 5° below ours.

It was 18° at 3 P. M. by ours when I went out to walk. I picked up on the bare ice of the river, opposite the oak in Shattuck's land, on a small space blown bare of snow, a fuzzy caterpillar, black at the two ends and red-brown in the middle, rolled into a ball or close ring, like a woodchuck. I pressed it hard between my fingers and found it frozen. I put it into my hat, and when I took it out in the evening, it soon began to stir and at length crawled about, but a portion of it was not quite flexible. It took some time for it to thaw. This is the fifth cold day, and it must have been frozen so long. It was more than an inch long.

Miss Minott tells me that she does not think her brother George has ever been to Boston more than once (though she tells me he says he has been twice),[1] and certainly not since 1812. He was born in the Casey house, *i. e.* the same in which C. lived, the second of three that stood beyond the old black house beyond Moore's. Casey was a Guinea negro. Casey used to weep in his latter days when he thought of his wife and two children in Africa from whom he was kidnapped. Minott went only to the East Quarter schools. The house he now lives in is about sixty years old, was moved from beside Casey's to where it now stands before it was roofed. Minott says he has lived where he now does as much as sixty years. He has not been up in town for three years, on account of his rheumatism. Does nothing whatever in the house but read the news-

[1] *He* since tells me *once.*

papers and few old books they have, the Almanac especially, and hold the cats, and very little indeed out of the house. Is just able to saw and split the wood.

Jan. 11. Began snowing yesterday afternoon, and it is still snowing this forenoon.

Mother remembers the Cold Friday very well. She lived in the house where I was born. The people in the kitchen — Jack Garrison, Esther, and a Hardy girl — drew up close to the fire, but the dishes which the Hardy girl was washing froze as fast as she washed them, close to the fire. They managed to keep warm in the parlor by their great fires.

The other day a man came "just to get me to run a line in the woods." This is the usual request. "Do you know where one end of it is?" I asked. (It was the Stratton lot.) "No," said he, "I don't know either end; that is what I want to find." "Do you know either of the next sides of the lot?" Thinking a moment, he answered, "No." "Well, do you know any one side of the whole lot, or any corner?" After a little hesitation he said that he did not. Here, then, was a wood-lot of half a dozen acres, well enough described in a deed dated 1777, courses and distances given, but he could not tell exactly in what part of the universe any particular part of it was, but he expected me to find out. This was what he understood by "running." On the strength of this deed he had forbidden a man to chop wood somewhere.

Frequently, when my employer does not know where his land lies, and has put into my hands an ancient and

tattered piece of paper called his deed, which throws no light at all on the question, he turns away, saying, "I want you to make it all right. Give me all that belongs to me."

In the deed of the Stratton wood-lot, dated 1777, there is no mention [of] any building on [it] to be conveyed, so that probably there was only a cellar-hole there then, eighty years ago, as now. For so long, at least, it has been a mere dent in the earth there, to which, from time to time, dead horses or hogs were drawn from the village and cast in. These are our Ninevehs and Babylons. I approach such a cellar-hole as Layard the scene of his labors, and I do not fail to find there relics as interesting to me as his winged bulls.

For some years past I have partially offered myself as a lecturer; have been advertised as such several years. Yet I have had but two or three invitations to lecture in a year, and some years none at all. I congratulate myself on having been permitted to stay at home thus, I am so much richer for it. I do not see what I should have got of much value, but money, by going about, but I do see what I should have lost. It seems to me that I have a longer and more liberal lease of life thus. I cannot afford to be telling my experience, especially to those who perhaps will take no interest in it. I wish to be getting experience. You might as well recommend to a bear to leave his hollow tree and run about all winter scratching at all the hollow trees in the woods. He would be leaner in the spring than if he had stayed at home and sucked his claws. As for the lecture-goers, it is none

of their business what I think. I perceive that most make a great account of their relations, more or less personal and direct, to many men, coming before them as lecturers, writers, or public men. But all this is impertinent and unprofitable to me. I never yet recognized, nor was recognized by, a crowd of men. I was never assured of their existence, nor they of mine.

There was wit and even poetry in the negro's answer to the man who tried to persuade him that the slaves would not be obliged to work in heaven. "Oh, you g' way, Massa. I know better. If dere 's no work for cullud folks up dar, dey 'll *make* some fur 'em, and if dere 's nuffin better to do, dey 'll make 'em *shub de clouds along*. You can't fool this chile, Massa."

I was describing the other day my success in solitary and distant woodland walking outside the town. I do not go there to get my dinner, but to get that sustenance which dinners only preserve me to enjoy, without which dinners are a vain repetition. But how little men can help me in this! only by having a kindred experience. Of what use to tell them of my happiness? Thus, if ever we have anything important to say, it might be introduced with the remark: "It is nothing to you, in particular. It is none of your business, I know." *That* is what might be called going into *good society*. I never chanced to meet with any man so cheering and elevating and encouraging, so infinitely suggestive, as the stillness and solitude of the Well Meadow Field.

Men even think me odd and perverse because I do not prefer their society to this nymph or wood-god

rather. But I have tried them. I have sat down with a dozen of them together in a club, and instantly — they did not inspire me. One or another abused our ears with many words and a few thoughts which were not theirs. There was very little genuine goodness apparent. We are such hollow pretenders. I lost my time.

But out there! Who shall criticise that companion? It is like the hone to the knife. I bathe in that climate and am cleansed of all social impurities. I become a witness with unprejudiced senses to the order of the universe. *There* is nothing petty or impertinent, none to say, "See what a great man I am!" *There* chiefly, and not in the society of the wits, am I cognizant of wit. Shall I prefer a part, an infinitely small fraction, to the whole? There I get my underpinnings laid and repaired, cemented, levelled. There is my country club. We dine at the sign of the Shrub Oak, the New Albion House.[1]

I demand of my companion some evidence that he has travelled further than the sources of the Nile, that he has seen something, that he has been *out of town, out of the house.* Not that he can tell a good story, but that he can keep a good silence. Has he attended to a silence more significant than any story? Did he ever get out of the road which all men and fools travel? You call yourself a great traveller, perhaps, but can you get beyond the influence of a certain class of ideas?

I expect the time when there will be founded hospitals for the founders of hospitals.

[1] [Channing, p. 113.]

Jan. 13. I hear one thrumming a guitar below stairs. It reminds me of moments that I have lived. What a comment on our life is the least strain of music! It lifts me up above all the dust and mire of the universe. I soar or hover with clean skirts over the field of my life. It is ever life within life, in concentric spheres. The field wherein I toil or rust at any time is at the same time the field for such different kinds of life! The farmer's boy or hired man has an instinct which tells him as much indistinctly, and hence his dreams and his restlessness; hence, even, it is that he wants money to realize his dreams with. The identical field where I am leading my humdrum life, let but a strain of music be heard there, is seen to be the field of some unrecorded crusade or tournament the thought of which excites in us an ecstasy of joy. The way in which I am affected by this faint thrumming advertises me that there is still some health and immortality in the springs of me. What an elixir is this sound! I, who but lately came and went and lived under *a dish cover*, live now under the heavens. It releases me; it bursts my bonds. Almost all, perhaps all, our life is, speaking comparatively, a stereotyped despair; *i. e.*, we never at any time realize the full grandeur of our destiny. We forever and ever and habitually underrate our fate. Talk of infidels! Why, all of the race of man, except in the rarest moments when they are lifted above themselves by an ecstasy, are infidels. With the very best disposition, what does my belief amount to? This poor, timid, unenlightened, thick-skinned creature, what *can* it believe? I am, of course, hopelessly ignorant and unbelieving until some

divinity stirs within me. Ninety-nine one-hundredths of our lives we are mere hedgers and ditchers, but from time to time we meet with reminders of our destiny.

We hear the kindred vibrations, music! and we put out our dormant feelers unto the limits of the universe. We attain to a wisdom that passeth understanding. The stable continents undulate. The hard and fixed becomes fluid.

> "Unless above himself he can
> Erect himself, how poor a thing is man!"

When I *hear* music I fear no danger, I am invulnerable, I see no foe. I am related to the earliest times and to the latest.[1]

There are infinite degrees of life, from that which is next to sleep and death, to that which is forever awake and immortal. We must not confound man with man. We cannot conceive of a greater difference than between the life of one man and that of another. I am constrained to believe that the mass of men are never so lifted above themselves that their destiny is seen to be transcendently beautiful and grand.

P. M. — On the river to Bittern Rock.

The river is now completely concealed by snow. I come this way partly because it is the best walking here, the snow not so deep. The only wild life I notice is a crow on a distant oak. The snow is drifted and much deeper about the button-bushes, etc. It is surprising

[1] [Channing, p. 332.]

what an effect a thin barrier of bushes has on it, causing it to lodge there until often a very large drift is formed more or less abrupt on the south. Woolgrass still rises above the snow along the sides.

In a very few places, for half a dozen feet the snow is blown off, revealing the dark transparent ice, in which I see numerous great white cleavages, which show its generous thickness, a foot at least. They cross each other at various angles and are frequently curved vertically, reflecting rainbow tints from within. Small triangles only a foot or two over are seen to be completely cracked around at the point of convulsion, yet it is as firm there as anywhere. I am proud of the strength of my floor, and love to jump and stamp there and bear my whole weight on it. As transparent as glass, yet you might found a house on it. Then there are little feathery flake-like twisted cleavages, which extend not more than an inch into it.

I see no tracks but of mice, and apparently of foxes, which have visited every muskrat-house and then turned short away.

Am surprised to see, returning, how much it has drifted in the Corner road. It has overflowed from the northern fields and lodged behind the north wall, forming drifts as high as the wall, which extend from one third to two thirds across the road for two long reaches, driving the traveller into the neighboring field, having

taken down the fence. It must be pleasant to ride along in the narrow path against the untouched and spotless edge of the drift, which curves over sharp like the visor of a cap. Sometimes this edge is bent down till it is almost vertical, yet a foot or two wide and only a few inches thick.

Jan. 14. P. M. — Up Assabet on ice.

I go slumping four or five inches in the snow on the river, and often into water above the ice, breaking through a slight crust under the snow, which has formed in the night. Each cold day this concealed overflow, mixing with the snow beneath, is converted into ice, and so raises it, makes the surface snow shallower, and improves the walking; but unless it is quite cold, this snow and water is apt to get a slight crust only, through which you sink.

I notice, on the black willows and also on the alders and white maples overhanging the stream, numerous dirty-white cocoons, about an inch long, attached by their sides to the base of the recent twigs and disguised by dry leaves curled about them, — a sort of fruit which these trees bear now. The leaves are not attached to the twigs, but artfully arranged about and fastened to the cocoons. Almost every little cluster of leaves contains a cocoon, apparently of one species. So that often when you would think that the trees were retaining their leaves, it is not the trees but the caterpillars that have retained them. I do not see a cluster of leaves on a maple, unless on a dead twig, but it conceals a cocoon. Yet I cannot find one alive; they are all crumbled

within. The black willows retain very few of their narrow curled leaves here and there, like the terminal leafet of a fern (the alders and maples scarcely any ever), yet these few are just enough to withdraw attention from those which surround the cocoons. What kind of understanding was there between the mind that determined that these leaves should hang on during the winter, and that of the worm that fastened a few of these leaves to its cocoon in order to disguise it? [1] I thus walk along the edge of the trees and bushes which overhang the stream, gathering the cocoons, which probably were thought to be doubly secure here. These cocoons, of course, were attached before the leaves had fallen. Almost every one is already empty, or contains only the relics of a nymph. It has been attacked and devoured by some foe. These numerous cocoons attached to the twigs overhanging the stream in the still and biting winter day suggest a certain fertility in the river borders, — impart a kind of life to them, — and so are company to me. There is so much more life than is suspected in the most solitary and dreariest scene. They are as much as the lisping of a chickadee.

Hemlock seeds are scattered over the snow. The birch (white) catkins appear to lose their seeds first at the base, though that may be the uppermost. They are blown or shaken off, leaving a bare threadlike core.

Mr. Wild tells me that while he lived on Nantucket he never observed the thermometer lower than 2° above zero.

[1] [Channing, p. 122.]

Jan. 15. P. M. — To Fair Haven Pond and across to railroad.

As I passed the south shed at the depot, observed what I thought a tree sparrow on the wood in the shed, a mere roof open at the side, under which several men were at that time employed sawing wood with a horse-power. Looking closer, I saw, to my surprise, that it must be a song sparrow, it having the usual marks on its breast and no bright-chestnut crown. The snow is nine or ten inches deep, and it appeared to have taken refuge in this shed, where was much bare ground exposed by removing the wood. When I advanced, instead of flying away, it concealed itself in the wood, just as it often dodges behind a wall.[1]

What is there in music that it should so stir our deeps? We are all ordinarily in a state of desperation; such is our life; ofttimes it drives us to suicide. To how many, perhaps to most, life is barely tolerable, and if it were not for the fear of death or of dying, what a multitude would immediately commit suicide! But let us hear a strain of music, we are at once advertised of a life which no man had told us of, which no preacher preaches. Suppose I try to describe faithfully the prospect which a strain of music exhibits to me. The field of my life becomes a boundless plain, glorious to tread, with no death nor disappointment at the end of it. All meanness and trivialness disappear. I become adequate to any deed. No particulars survive this expansion; persons do not survive it. In the light of this strain there is no thou nor I. We are actually lifted above ourselves.

[1] *Vide* Jan. 22d.

The tracks of the mice near the head of Well Meadow were particularly interesting. There was a level surface of pure snow there, unbroken by bushes or grass, about four rods across, and here were nine tracks of mice running across it from the bushes on this side to those on the other, the tracks quite near together but repeatedly crossing each other at very acute angles, but each particular course was generally quite direct. The snow was so light that only one distinct track was made by all four of the feet, five or six inches apart, but the tail left a very distinct mark. A single track, thus stretching away almost straight, sometimes half a dozen rods, over unspotted snow, is very handsome, like a chain of a new pattern; and then they suggest an airy lightness in the body that impressed them. Though there may have been but one or two here, the tracks suggesting quite a little company that had gone gadding over to their neighbors under the opposite bush. Such is the delicacy of the impression on the surface of the lightest snow, where other creatures sink, and night, too, being the season when these tracks are made, they remind me of a fairy revel. It is almost as good as if the actors were here. I can easily imagine all the rest. Hopping is expressed by the tracks themselves. Yet I should like much to see by broad daylight a company of these revellers hopping over the snow. There is a still life in America that is little observed or dreamed of. Here were possible auditors and critics which the lecturer at the Lyceum last night did not think of. How snug they are somewhere under the snow now, not to be thought of, if it were not for these pretty tracks! And for a week, or

fortnight even, of pretty still weather the tracks will remain, to tell of the nocturnal adventures of a tiny mouse who was not beneath the notice of the Lord. So it was so many thousands of years before Gutenberg invented printing with *his* types, and so it will be so many thousands of years after his types are forgotten, perchance. The deer mouse will be printing on the snow of Well Meadow to be read by a new race of men.

Cold as the weather is and has been, almost all the brook is open in the meadow there, an artery of black water in the midst of the snow, and there are many sink-holes, where the water is exposed at the bottom of a dimple in the snow. Indeed, in some places these little black spots are distributed very thickly, the snow in swells covering the intervening tussocks.

Jan. 16. P. M. — Up Assabet.

This morning was one of the coldest. It improves the walking on the river, freezing the overflow beneath the snow. As I pass the Island (Egg Rock), I notice the ice-foot adhering to the rock about two feet above the surface of the ice generally. The ice there for a few feet in width slants up to it, and, owing to this, the snow is blown off it. This edging of ice revealed is peculiarly green by contrast with the snow, methinks. So, too, where the ice, settling, has rested on a rock which has burst it and now holds it high above the surrounding level. The same phenomena, no doubt, on a much larger scale occur at the north.

I observe that the holes which I bored in the white maples last spring were nearly grown over last summer,

commonly to within a quarter or an eighth of an inch, but in one or two instances, in very thriftily growing trees, they were entirely closed.

When I was surveying Shattuck's [and] Merrick's pasture fields the other day, McManus, who was helping me, said that they would be worth a hundred or two hundred dollars more if it were not for the willow-rows which bound and separate them, for you could not plow parallel with them within five rods on account of the roots, you must plow at right angles with them. Yet it is not many years since they were set out, as I remember. However, there should be a great amount of root to account for their wonderful vivaciousness, making seven or eight feet in a year when trimmed.

Jan. 18. A very cold day. Thermometer at 7.30 A. M., −14° (Smith's hanging on same nail −20°); at 1.15 P. M., −3°; 2.15 P. M., −4°; 3.45 P. M., 0°. It is cloudy and no sun all day, and considerable wind also. There was no Sabbath-school on account of the cold; could not warm the room.

We sometimes think that the inferior animals act foolishly, but are there any greater fools than mankind? Consider how so many, perhaps most, races — Chinese, Japanese, Arabs, Mussulmans generally, Russians — treat the traveller; what fears and prejudices he has to contend with. So many millions believing that he has come [to] do them some harm. Let a traveller set out to go round the world, visiting every race, and he shall meet with such treatment at their hands that he will be obliged to pronounce them incorrigible fools. Even in

Virginia a naturalist who was seen crawling through a meadow catching frogs, etc., was seized and carried before the authorities.

Three little pigs were frozen to death in an Irishman's pen last night at the Green Store.

Began to snow in the evening, the thermometer at zero.

Jan. 19. A snow-storm with very high wind all last night and to-day. Though not much snow falls (perhaps seven or eight inches), it is exceedingly drifted, so that the first train gets down about noon and none gets up till about 6 P. M.! There is no vehicle passing the house before 2 P. M.! A fine dry snow, intolerable to face.

Jan. 20. There probably is not more than twelve to fifteen inches of snow on a level, yet the drifts are very large. Neither milkman nor butcher got here yesterday, and to-day the milkman came with oxen, partly through the fields. Though the snow is nowhere deep in the middle of the main street, the drifts are very large, especially on the north side, so that, as you look down the street, it appears as uneven as a rolling prairie.

Heard, in the Dennis swamp by the railroad this afternoon, the peculiar goldfinch-like mew — also like some canaries — of, I think, the lesser redpoll (?). Saw several. Heard the same a week or more ago.

I hear that Boston Harbor froze over on the 18th, down to Fort Independence. The river has been frozen everywhere except at the very few swiftest places since

about December 18th, and *everywhere* since about January 1st.

At R. W. E.'s this evening, at about 6 P. M., I was called out to see Eddy's cave in the snow. It was a hole about two and a half feet wide and six feet long, into a drift, a little winding, and he had got a lamp at the inner extremity. I observed, as I approached in a course at right angles with the length of the cave, that the mouth of the cave was lit as if the light were close to it, so that I did not suspect its depth. Indeed, the light of this lamp was remarkably reflected and distributed. The snowy walls were one universal reflector with countless facets. I think that one lamp would light sufficiently a hall built of this material. The snow about the mouth of the cave within had the yellow color of the flame to one approaching, as if the lamp were close to it. We afterward buried the lamp in a little crypt in this snow-drift and walled it in, and found that its light was visible, even in this *twilight*, through fifteen inches' thickness of snow. The snow was all aglow with it. If it had been darker, probably it would have been visible through a much greater thickness. But, what was most surprising to me, when Eddy crawled into the extremity of his cave and shouted at the top of his voice, it sounded ridiculously faint, as if he were a quarter of a mile off, and at first I could not believe that he spoke loud, but we all of us crawled in by turns, and though our heads were only six feet from those outside, our loudest shouting only amused and surprised them. Apparently the porous snow drank up all the sound. The voice was, in fact, muffled by the surrounding snow walls, and

I saw that we might lie in that hole screaming for assistance in vain, while travellers were passing along twenty feet distant. It had the effect of ventriloquism. So you only need make a snow house in your yard and pass an hour in it, to realize a good deal of Esquimau life.

Jan. 21. P. M. — Up river to W. Wheeler's Bridge and back by road.

The roads are perhaps more blocked up than last winter, yet with hardly more than half as much snow. The river is now so concealed that a common eye would not suspect its existence. It is drifted on it exactly as on the meadow, *i. e.* successive low drifts with a bluff head toward the wind.

It is remarkable how many tracks of foxes you will see quite near the village, where they have been in the night, and yet a regular walker will not glimpse one oftener than once in eight or ten years.

The overflow, under the snow, is generally at the bends, where the river is narrower and swifter.

I noticed that several species of birds lingered late this year. The *F. hyemalis*, and then there was that woodcock, and song sparrow! What does it mean?

As I flounder along the Corner road against the root fence, a very large flock of snow buntings alight with a wheeling flight amid the weeds rising above the snow in Potter's heater piece, — a hundred or two of them. They run restlessly amid the weeds, so that I can hardly get sight of them through my glass; then suddenly all arise and fly only two or three rods, alighting within

three rods of me. (They keep up a constant twittering.) It was as if they were any instant ready for a longer flight, but their leader had not so ordered it. Suddenly away they sweep again, and I see them alight in a distant field where the weeds rise above the snow, but in a few minutes they have left that also and gone further north. Beside their *rippling* note, they have a vibratory twitter, and from the loiterers you hear quite a tender peep, as they fly after the vanishing flock.

What independent creatures! They go seeking their food from north to south. If New Hampshire and Maine are covered deeply with snow, they scale down to Massachusetts for their breakfasts. Not liking the grain in this field, away they dash to another distant one, attracted by the weeds rising above the snow. Who can guess in what field, by what river or mountain they breakfasted this morning. They did not seem to regard me so near, but as they went off, their wave actually broke over me as a rock. They have the pleasure of society at their feasts, a hundred dining at once, busily talking while eating, remembering what occurred at Grinnell Land. As they flew past me they presented a pretty appearance, somewhat like broad bars of white alternating with bars of black.

Jan. 22. Snows all day, clearing up at night, — a remarkably fine and dry snow, which, looking out, you might suspect to be blowing snow merely. Yet thus it snows all day, driving almost horizontally, but it does not amount to much.

P. M. — To Walden.

I never knew it to make such a business of snowing and bring so little to pass. The air is filled, so that you cannot see far against it, *i. e.* looking north-northwest, yet but an inch or two falls all day. There is some drifting, however.

You wonder how the tree sparrows can seek their food on the railroad causeway, flying in the face of such a fine, cold, driving snow-storm. Within the woods it is comparatively still. In the woods by Abel Brooks's rye hollow I hear a faint note, and see undoubtedly a brown creeper inspecting the branches of the oaks. It has white and black bars on the head, uttering from time to time a fine, wiry, *screeping tse, tse,* or *tse, tse, tse.*

Minott tells me that Sam Barrett told him once when he went to mill that a song sparrow took up its quarters in his grist-mill and stayed there all winter. When it did not help itself he used to feed it with meal, for he was glad of its company; so, what with the dashing water and the crumbs of meal, it must have fared well.

I asked M. about the Cold Friday. He said, "It was plaguy cold; it stung like a wasp." He remembers seeing them toss up water in a shoemaker's shop, usually a very warm place, and when it struck the floor it was frozen and rattled like so many shot. Old John Nutting used to say, "When it is cold it is a sign it's going to be warm," and "When it 's warm it 's a sign it 's going to be cold."

Jan. 23. The coldest day that I remember recording, clear and bright, but very high wind, blowing the snow. Ink froze. Had to break the ice in my pail with a ham-

mer. Thermometer at 6.45 A. M., − 18°; at 10.30, − 14° (Smith's, − 20°; Wilds', − 7°, the last being in a more sheltered place); at 12.45, − 9°; at 4 P. M., − 5½°; at 7.30 P. M., − 8°. I may safely say that − 5° has been the highest temperature to-day by our thermometer.

Walking this afternoon, I notice that the face inclines to stiffen, and the hands and feet get cold soon. On first coming out in very cold weather, I find that I breathe fast, though without walking faster or exerting myself any more than usual.

Jan. 24. Thermometer about 6.30 A. M. in the bulb ! ! but Smith's on the same nail, − 30°; Wilds', early, − 16°; Emerson's, the same; at 9.15 A. M., ours, − 18°; Smith's, − 22°; which would indicate that ours would have stood at − 26° at 6.30, if the thermometer had been long enough. At 11.30 A. M. ours was − 1°, at 4 P. M., + 12°. So the cold spell that began the evening of the 22d ended to-day noon.[1]

Jan. 25. Still another very cold morning. Smith's thermometer over ours at − 29°, ours in bulb; but about seven, ours was at − 18° and Smith's at − 24; ours therefore at first about − 23°.

P. M. — To Bittern Rock on river.

The road beyond Hubbard's Bridge has been closed by snow for two or three weeks; only the walls show that there has been a road there. Travellers take to the fields.

I see the track of a fox or dog across the meadow,

[1] No. *Vide* below.

made some time ago. Each track is now a pure white snowball rising three inches above the surrounding surface, and this has formed a lee behind which a narrow drift has formed, extending a foot or two southeasterly.

Jan. 26. Another cold morning. None looked early, but about eight it was − 14°.

A. M. — At Cambridge and Boston.

Saw Boston Harbor frozen over (for some time). Reminded me of, I think, Parry's Winter Harbor, with vessels frozen in. Saw thousands on the ice, a stream of men reaching down to Fort Independence, where they were cutting a channel toward the city. Ice said to reach fourteen miles. Snow untracked on many decks.[1]

At 10 P. M., + 14°.

Jan. 27. Thawing a little at last. Thermometer 35°.

The most poetic and truest account of objects is generally by those who first observe them, or the discoverers of them, whether a sharper perception and curiosity in them led to the discovery or the greater novelty more inspired their report. Accordingly I love most to read the accounts of a country, its natural productions and curiosities, by those who first settled it, and also the earliest, though often unscientific, writers on natural science.

Hear the unusual sound of pattering rain this afternoon, though it is not yet in earnest. Thermometer

[1] Ice did not finally go out till about Feb. 15th.

to-day commonly at 38°. Wood in the stove is slow to burn; often goes out with this dull atmosphere. But it is less needed.

10 P. M. — Hear music below. It washes the dust off my life and everything I look at.

Was struck to-day with the admirable simplicity of Pratt. He told me not only of the discovery of the tower of Babel, which, from the measures given, he had calculated could not stand between the roads at the Mill Pond, but of the skeleton of a man twenty feet long. Also of an eyestone which he has, bought of Betty Nutting, about as big as half a pea. Just lay it in your eye, bind up your eye with a handkerchief, and go to bed. It will not pain you, but you will feel it moving about, and when it has gathered all the dirt in the eye to itself, it will always come out, and you will probably find it in the handkerchief. It is a little thing and you must look sharp for it. He often lends his.

Jan. 28. Am again surprised to see a song sparrow sitting for hours on our wood-pile in the yard, in the midst of snow in the yard. It is unwilling to move. People go to the pump, and the cat and dog walk round the wood-pile without starting it. I examine it at my leisure through a glass. Remarkable that the coldest of all winters these summer birds should remain. Perhaps it is no more comfortable this season further south, where they are accustomed to abide. In the afternoon this sparrow joined a flock of tree sparrows on the bare ground west of the house. It was amusing to see the tree sparrows wash themselves, standing in the

puddles and tossing the water over themselves. Minott says they wade in to where it is an inch deep and then "splutter splutter," throwing the water over them. They have had no opportunity to wash for a month, perhaps, there having been no thaw. The song sparrow did not go off with them.

P. M. — To Walden.

Notice many heaps of leaves on snow on the hillside southwest of the pond, *as usual*. Probably the rain and thaw have brought down some of them.

Jan. 31. Snows fast, turning to rain at last.

VII

FEBRUARY, 1857

(ÆT. 39)

Feb. 1. 3 P. M. — Down railroad.

Thermometer at 42°. Warm as it is, I see a large flock of snow buntings on the railroad causeway. Their wings are white above next the body, but black or dark beyond and on the back. This produces that regular black and white effect when they fly past you.

A laborer on the railroad tells me it is Candlemas Day (February 2d) to-morrow and the winter half out. "Half your wood and half your hay," etc., etc.; and, as that day is, so will be the rest of the winter.

Feb. 2. The snow-crust on all hills and knolls is now marked by the streams of water that have flowed down it, like a coarsely combed head; *i. e.*, the unbroken crust is in alternate ridges and furrows from the tops of the hills to the bottoms.

Feb. 3. To Fitchburg to lecture.

Observed that the Nashua at the bridge beyond Groton Junction was open for twenty rods, as the Concord is not anywhere in Concord. This must be owing to the greater swiftness of the former.

Though the snow was not deep, I noticed that an unbroken snow-crust stretched around Fitchburg, and

its several thousand inhabitants had been confined so long to the narrow streets, some of them a track only six feet wide. Hardly one individual had anywhere departed from this narrow walk and struck out into the surrounding fields and hills. If I had had my cowhide boots, I should not have confined myself to those narrow limits, but have climbed some of the hills. It is surprising to go into a New England town in midwinter and find its five thousand inhabitants all living thus on the limits, confined at most to their narrow moose-yard in the snow. Scarcely here and there has a citizen stepped aside one foot to let a sled pass. And almost as circumscribed is their summer life, going only from house to shop and back to house again. If, Indian-like, one examined the dew or bended grass, he would be surprised to discover how little trodden or frequented the surrounding fields were, to discover perhaps large tracts wholly untrodden, which await, as it were, for some caravan to assemble before any will traverse them. It is as if some vigilance committee had given notice that if any should transgress those narrow limits he should be outlawed and his blood should be upon his own head. You don't see where the inhabitants get sufficient exercise, unless they swing dumb-bells down cellar. Let a slight snow come and cover the earth, and the tracks of men will show how little the woods and fields are frequented.

I was pleased to see several loads entirely of beech wood in the street at Fitchburg. It had a peculiarly *green*, solid, sappy look, coasting down the hills into Fitchburg.

Feb. 4. Met Theodore Parker in the cars, who told me that he had recently found in Lake Michigan a single ball, five inches in diameter, like those I presented to the Natural History Society, though he did not observe the eriocaulon. It was late in the season.

Yet along that sled-track (*vide* the 3d) they will have their schools and lyceums and churches, like the snow-heaps crowded up by the furrow, and consider themselves liberally educated, notwithstanding their narrow views and range. And the bare track that leads to the next town and seaboard, only six inches' breadth of iron rails! and a one-eighth-inch wire in the air!

I sometimes hear a prominent but dull-witted worthy man say, or hear that he has said, rarely, that if it were not for his firm belief in "an overruling power," or a "perfect Being," etc., etc. But such poverty-stricken expressions only convince me of his habitual doubt and that he is surprised into a transient belief. Such a man's expression of faith, moving solemnly in the traditional furrow, and casting out all free-thinking and living souls with the rusty mould-board of his compassion or contempt, thinking that he has Moses and all the prophets in his wake, discourages and saddens me as an expression of his narrow and barren want of faith. I see that the infidels and skeptics have formed themselves into churches and weekly gather together at the ringing of a bell.

Sometimes when, in conversation or a lecture, I have been grasping at, or even standing and reclining upon, the serene and everlasting truths that underlie and support our vacillating life, I have seen my audi-

tors standing on their *terra firma*, the quaking earth, crowded together on their Lisbon Quay, and compassionately or timidly watching my motions as if they were the antics of a rope-dancer or mountebank pretending to walk on air; or here and there one creeping out upon an overhanging but cracking bough, unwilling to drop to the adamantine floor beneath, or perchance even venturing out a step or two, as if it were a dangerous kittly-bender, timorously sounding as he goes. So the other day, as I stood on Walden, drinking at a puddle on the ice, which was probably two feet thick, and thinking how lucky I was that I had not got to cut through all that thickness, I was amused to see an Irish laborer on the railroad, who had come down to drink, timidly tiptoeing toward me in his cowhide boots, lifting them nearly two feet at each step and fairly trembling with fear, as if the ice were already bending beneath his ponderous body and he were about to be engulfed. "Why, my man," I called out to him, "this ice will bear a loaded train, half a dozen locomotives side by side, a whole herd of oxen," suggesting whatever would be a weighty argument with him. And so at last he fairly straightened up and quenched his thirst. It was very ludicrous to me, who was thinking, by chance, what a labor it would be to get at the water with an axe there and that I was lucky to find some on the surface.

So, when I have been resting and quenching my thirst on the eternal plains of truth, where rests the base of those beautiful columns that sustain the heavens, I have been amused to see a traveller who had long

confined himself to the quaking shore, which was all covered with the traces of the deluge, come timidly tiptoeing toward me, trembling in every limb.

I see the crowd of materialists gathered together on their Lisbon Quay for safety, thinking it a *terra firma*.

Though the farmer has been all winter teaming wood along the river, the timid citizen that buys it, but who has not stepped out of the road, thinks it all kittly-benders there and warns his boys not to go near it.

Minott says that Dr. Heywood used to have a crazy hen (and he, too, has had one). She went about by herself uttering a peevish *craw craw*, and did not lay. One day he was going along on the narrow peninsula of Goose Pond looking for ducks, away in Walden Woods a mile and a half from Heywood's, when he met this very hen, which passed close by him, uttering as usual a faint *craw craw*. He knew her perfectly well, and says that he was never so surprised at anything in his life. How she had escaped the foxes and hawks was more than he knew.

Told a story about one Josh Piper, a harelipped man, who lived down east awhile, whose wife would not let him occupy her bed; but he used to catch ducks there in a net on the shore as they do pigeons, and so got feathers enough to fill the bed, and therefore thought he had a right to lie on it.

Feb. 5. Mizzling rain.

Feb. 6. 9 A. M. — Down railroad to see the *glaze*, the first we have had this year, but not a very good one.

It is about a fifth or a sixth of an inch thick on the northeast sides of twigs, etc., not transparent, but of an opaque white, granular character. The woods, especially wooded hillsides half a mile or more distant, have a rich, hoary, frosted look, still and stiff, yet it is not so thick but that the green of the pines and the yellow of the willow bark and the leather-color of oak leaves show through it. These colors are pleasantly toned down. The pines transmit a subdued green, — some pitch pines a livelier grass green, — deepest in the recesses, and a delicate buff (?) tinge is seen through the frosty veil of the willow. The birches, owing to the color of their trunks, are the most completely hoary. The elms, perhaps, are the most distinctly frosted, revealing their whole outlines like ghosts of trees, even a mile off, when seen against a dark hillside. The ground is encased in a thin *black* glaze (where it chances to be bare) and the iron rails and the telegraph wire. Insignificant weeds and stubble along the railroad causeway and elsewhere are now made very conspicuous, both by their increased size and bristling stiffness and their whiteness. Each wiry grass stem is become a stiff wand. The wind that begins to rise does not stir them; you only hear a fine crackling sound when it blows hardest. Behind each withered vegetable plant stands a stout ice plant, overlapping and concealing it. Stem answers to stem, and fruit to fruit. The heads of tansy are converted into confectionery somewhat like sugared almonds and regularly roughened (like orange-peel), and those of evening-primrose, and mullein, and hardhack, and lespedeza bear a still

coarser kind. The wild carrot's bird's-nest umbel, now contracted above, is converted into almost a perfect hollow sphere, composed of contiguous thickened meridional ribs, which remind me of the fingers of a starfish (or five-finger). Each plant preserves its character, though exaggerated. Pigweed and Roman wormwood are ragged as ever on a larger scale, and the butterweed as stiffly upright. Tall goldenrod still more recurved. You naturally avoid running against the plant which you did not notice before. Standing on the southeast side, I see the fine dark cores which the stems make. On the opposite side, only the pure white ice plant is seen.

When I reach the woods I am surprised to find that the twigs, etc., are bristling with fine spiculæ, which stand on a thin glaze. I do not remember to have seen them previous winters. They are from one quarter to five eighths of an inch long by one twenty-fifth to one fiftieth of an inch wide at base and quite sharp, commonly on the storm side of the twig only and pointing in all directions horizontally and even vertically within an arc of 90°, but sometimes on opposite sides of the twig. They answer exactly to prickles or spines, especially to those of the locust. I observe them on the locust itself by chance, an icy spine at right angles on a vegetable one, making such a branch as is seen on some species. There are often ten or twelve within an inch along the twigs, but they are most like thorns when fewer. All the twigs and weeds and leaves, even the pine-needles, are armed with them. The pine-needles especially, beside their hoary glaze, are bris-

tling with countless fine spiculæ, which appear to point in almost all directions. It is also interesting to meet with them by accident on the edges of oak leaves, answering exactly to the vegetable spines there (though they are commonly at right angles with the plane of the leaf and often almost as thick as a comb), and on pine cones, suggesting that there should be something in that soil especially favorable to promote the growth of spines. As far as I observed, these spines were chiefly confined to the woods, — at least I had not noticed them on the causeway, — as if a fog might have collected in the former place but not in the last. They were, then, built in the mist, by a more delicate accretion. Thus it seems that not leaves only but other forms of vegetation are imitated by frost.

Already the white pine plumes were drooping, but the pitch pines stood stiffly erect. I was again struck by the deep open cup at the extremity of the latter, formed by the needles standing out very regularly around the red-brown buds at the bottom. It is very warm, and by ten o'clock this ice is rapidly falling from the trees and covering the ground like hail; and before noon all that jewelry was dissolved.

Rice tells me that there was a lark on his place in Sudbury about the 1st of January.

One who has seen them tells me that a covey of thirteen quails daily visits Hayden's yard and barn, where he feeds them and can almost put his hands on them.

Thermometer at noon 52°.

Winckelmann says in his "History of Ancient Art,"

vol. i, page 95: "I am now past forty, and therefore at an age when one can no longer sport freely with life. I perceive, also, that a certain delicate spirit begins to evaporate, with which I raised myself, by powerful soarings, to the contemplation of the beautiful."

Feb. 7. Another warm day, the snow fast going off. I am surprised to see over Walden Pond, which is covered with puddles, that seething or shimmering in the air which is observed over the fields in a warm day in summer, close over the ice for several feet in height, notwithstanding that the sky is completely overcast. The thermometer was at 52½° when I came out at 3 P. M. The water on the ice is for the most part several inches deep, and trees reflected in it appear as when seen through a mist or smoke, apparently owing to the color of the ice. It is so warm that I am obliged to take off my greatcoat and carry it on my arm. Now the hollows are full of those greenish pods.

As I was coming through the woods from Walden to Hayden's, I heard a loud or tumultuous warbling or twittering of birds coming on in the air, much like a flock of red-wings in the spring, and even expected to see them at first, but when they came in sight and passed over my head I saw that they were probably redpolls. They fly rather slowly.

Hayden the elder tells me that the quails have come to his yard every day for almost a month and are just as tame as chickens. They come about his wood-shed, he supposes to pick up the worms that have dropped out of the wood, and when it storms hard gather together

in the corner of the shed. He walks within, say, three or four feet of them without disturbing them. They come out of the woods by the graveyard, and sometimes they go down toward the river. They will be about his yard the greater part of the day; were there yesterday, though it was so warm, but now probably they can get food enough elsewhere. They go just the same to Poland's, across the road. About ten years ago there was a bevy of fifteen that used to come from the same woods, and one day, they being in the barn and scared by the cat, four ran into the hay and died there. The former do not go to the houses further from the woods. Thus it seems in severe winters the quails venture out of the woods and join the poultry of the farmer's yard, if it be near the edge of the wood. It is remarkable that this bird, which thus half domesticates itself, should not be found wholly domesticated before this.

Several men I have talked with froze their ears a fortnight ago yesterday, the cold Friday; one who had never frozen his ears before.

Many of the roads about the town, which for long distances have been completely closed by the snow for more than a month, are just beginning to be open. The sleighs, etc., which have all this time gone round through the fields, are now trying to make their way through in some places. I do not [know] when they have been so much obstructed.

Feb. 8. Debauched and worn-out senses require the violent vibrations of an instrument to excite them, but *sound* and still youthful senses, not enervated by

luxury, hear music in the wind and rain and running water. One would think from reading the critics that music was intermittent as a spring in the desert, dependent on some Paganini or Mozart, or heard only when the Pierians or Euterpeans drive through the villages; but music is perpetual, and only hearing is intermittent. I hear it in the softened air of these warm February days which have broken the back of the winter.

For two nights past it has not frozen, but a thick mist has overhung the earth, and you awake to the unusual and agreeable sight of water in the streets. Several strata of snow have been washed away from the drifts, down to that black one formed when dust was blowing from plowed fields.

Riordan's solitary cock, standing on such an icy snow-heap, feels the influence of the softened air, and the steam from patches of bare ground here and there, and has found his voice again. The warm air has thawed the music in his throat, and he crows lustily and unweariedly, his voice rising to the last. Yesterday morning our feline Thomas, also feeling the springlike influence, stole away along the fences and walls, which raise him above the water, and only returned this morning reeking with wet. Having got his breakfast, he already stands on his hind legs, looking wishfully through the window, and, the door being opened a little, he is at once off again in spite of the rain.

Again and again I congratulate myself on my so-called poverty. I was almost disappointed yesterday to find thirty dollars in my desk which I did not know

that I possessed, though now I should be sorry to lose it. The week that I go away to lecture, however much I may get for it, is unspeakably cheapened. The preceding and succeeding days are a mere sloping down and up from it.

In the society of many men, or in the midst of what is called success, I find my life of no account, and my spirits rapidly fall. I would rather be the barrenest pasture lying fallow than cursed with the compliments of kings, than be the sulphurous and accursed desert where Babylon once stood. But when I have only a rustling oak leaf, or the faint metallic cheep of a tree sparrow, for variety in my winter walk, my life becomes continent and sweet as the kernel of a nut. I would rather hear a single shrub oak leaf at the end of a wintry glade rustle of its own accord at my approach, than receive a shipload of stars and garters from the strange kings and peoples of the earth.

By poverty, *i. e.* simplicity of life and fewness of incidents, I am solidified and crystallized, as a vapor or liquid by cold. It is a singular concentration of strength and energy and flavor. Chastity is perpetual acquaintance with the All. My diffuse and vaporous life becomes as the frost leaves and spiculæ radiant as gems on the weeds and stubble in a winter morning. You think that I am impoverishing myself by withdrawing from men, but in my solitude I have woven for myself a silken web or *chrysalis*, and, nymph-like, shall ere long burst forth a more perfect creature, fitted for a higher society. By simplicity, commonly called poverty, my life is concentrated and so becomes organ-

ized, or a κόσμος, which before was inorganic and lumpish.

The otter must roam about a great deal, for I rarely see fresh tracks in the same neighborhood a second time the same winter, though the old tracks may be apparent all the winter through. I should not wonder if one went up and down the whole length of the river.

Hayden senior (sixty-eight years old) tells me that he has been at work regularly with his team almost every day this winter, in spite of snow and cold. Even that cold Friday, about a fortnight ago, he did not go to a fire from early morning till night. As the thermometer, even at 12.45 P. M., was at −9°, with a very violent wind from the northwest, this was as bad as an ordinary arctic day. He was hauling logs to a mill, and persevered in making his paths through the drifts, he alone breaking the road. However, he froze his ears that Friday. Says he never knew it so cold as the past month. He has a fine elm directly behind his house, divided into many limbs near the ground. It is a question which is the most valuable, this tree or the house. In hot summer days it shades the whole house. He is going to build a shed around it, inclosing the main portion of the trunk.

P. M. — To Hubbard Bath.

Another very warm day, I should think warmer than the last. The sun is from time to time promising to show itself through the mist, but does not. A thick steam is everywhere rising from the earth and snow,

and apparently this makes the clouds which conceal the sun, the air being so much warmer than the earth. The snow is gone off very rapidly in the night, and much of the earth is bare, and the ground partially thawed. It is exciting to walk over the moist, bare pastures, though slumping four or five inches, and see the green mosses again. This vapor from the earth is so thick that I can hardly see a quarter of a mile, and ever and anon it condenses to rain-drops, which are felt on my face. The river has risen, and the water is pretty well over the meadows. If this weather holds a day or two longer, the river will break up generally.

I see one of those great ash-colored puffballs with a tinge of purple, open like a cup, four inches in diameter. The upper surface is (as it were bleached) quite hoary. Though it is but just brought to light from beneath the deep snow, and the last two days have been misty or rainy without sun, it is just as dry and dusty as ever, and the drops of water rest on it, at first undetected, being coated with its dust, looking like unground pearls. I brought it home and held it in a basin of water. To my surprise, when held under water it looked like a mass of silver or melted lead, it was so coated with air, and when I suffered it to rise, — for it had to be kept down by force, — instead of being heavy like a sponge which has soaked water, it was as light as a feather, and its surface perfectly dry, and when touched it gave out its dust the same as ever. It was impossible to wet. It seems to be encased in a silvery coat of air which is water-tight. The water did not penetrate into it at all, and running off as you lifted it up, it was just as dry as

before, and on the least jar floating in dust above your head.

The ground is so bare that I gathered a few Indian relics.

And now another friendship is ended. I do not know what has made my friend doubt me, but I know that in love there is no mistake, and that every estrangement is well founded. But my destiny is not narrowed, but if possible the broader for it. The heavens withdraw and arch themselves higher. I am sensible not only of a moral, but even a grand physical pain, such as gods may feel, about my head and breast, a certain ache and fullness. This rending of a tie, it is not my work nor thine. It is no accident that we mind; it is only the awards of fate that are affecting. I know of no æons, or periods, no life and death, but these meetings and separations. My life is like a stream that is suddenly dammed and has no outlet; but it rises the higher up the hills that shut it in, and will become a deep and silent lake. Certainly there is no event comparable for grandeur with the eternal separation — if we may conceive it so — from a being that we have known. I become in a degree sensible of the meaning of finite and infinite. What a grand significance the word "never" acquires! With one with whom we have walked on high ground we cannot deal on any lower ground ever after. We have tried for so many years to put each other to this immortal use, and have failed. Undoubtedly our good genii have mutually found the material unsuitable. We have hitherto paid each other the highest possible compliment; we have recognized each other

constantly as divine, have afforded each other that opportunity to live that no other wealth or kindness can afford. And now, for some reason inappreciable by us, it has become necessary for us to withhold this mutual aid. Perchance there is none beside who knows us for a god, and none whom we know for such. Each man and woman is a veritable god or goddess, but to the mass of their fellows disguised. There is only one in each case who sees through the disguise. That one who does not stand so near to any man as to see the divinity in him is truly alone. I am perfectly sad at parting from you. I could better have the earth taken away from under my feet, than the thought of you from my mind. One while I think that some great injury has been done, with which you are implicated, again that you are no party to it. I fear that there may be incessant tragedies, that one may treat his fellow as a god but receive somewhat less regard from him. I now almost for the first time *fear* this. Yet I believe that in the long run there is no such inequality.

Here we are in the backwoods of America repeating Hebrew prayers and psalms in which occur such words as *amen* and *selah*, the meaning of some of which we do not quite understand, reminding me of Moslem prayers in which, it seems, the same or similar words are used. How Mormon-like!

Feb. 10. The thaw which began on the 4th lasted through the 8th.

When I surveyed Shattuck's Merrick's pasture fields, about January 10th, I was the more pleased with the

task because of the three willow-rows about them. One, trimmed a year before, had grown about seven feet, a dense hedge of bright-yellow osiers. But MacManus, who was helping me, said that he thought the land would be worth two hundred dollars more if the willows were out of the way, they so filled the ground with their roots. He had found that you could not plow within five rods [*sic*] of them, unless at right angles with the rows. Hayden, senior, tells me that when he lived with Abel Moore, Moore's son Henry one day set out a row of willow boughs for a hedge, but the father, who had just been eradicating an old willow-row at great labor and expense, asked Hayden who had done that and finally offered him a dollar if he would destroy them, which he agreed to do. So each morning, as he went to and from his work, he used to pull some of them up a little way, and if there were many roots formed he rubbed them off on a rock. And when, at the breakfast-table, Henry expressed wonder that his willows did not grow any better, being set in a rich soil, the father would look at Hayden and laugh.

Burton, the traveller, quotes an Arab saying, "Voyaging is a victory," which he refers to the feeling of independence on overcoming the difficulties and dangers of the desert. But I think that commonly voyaging is a defeat, a rout, to which the traveller is compelled by want of valor. The traveller's peculiar *valor* is commonly a bill of exchange. He is at home anywhere but where he was born and bred. Petitioning some Sir Joseph Banks or other representative of a Geographical

Society to avail himself of his restlessness, and, if not receiving a favorable answer, necessarily going off somewhere next morning. It is a prevalent disease, which attacks Americans especially, both men and women, the opposite to nostalgia. Yet it does not differ much from nostalgia. I read the story of one voyageress round the world, who, it seemed to me, having started, had no other object but to get home again, only she took the longest way round. Snatching at a fact or two in behalf of science as he goes, just as a panther in his leap will take off a man's sleeve and land twenty feet beyond him when travelling down-hill, being fitted out by some Sir Joseph Banks.

It seems that in Arabia, as well as in New England, they have the art of springing a prayer upon you. The Madani or inhabitants of El Medinah are, according to Burton, notwithstanding an assumed austerity and ceremoniousness, not easily matched in volubility and personal abuse. "When a man is opposed to more than his match in disputing or bargaining, . . . he interrupts the adversary with a 'Sall' ala Mohammed,' — bless the Prophet. Every good Moslem is obliged to obey such requisition by responding, 'Allahumma salli alayh,' — O Allah bless him! But the Madani curtails the phrase to 'A'n,' supposing it to be an equivalent, and proceeds in his loquacity. Then perhaps the baffled opponent will shout out 'Wahhid,' *i. e.* 'Attest the unity of the Deity;' when, instead of employing the usual religious phrases to assert that dogma, he will briefly ejaculate, 'Al,' and hurry on with the course of conversation." (Page 283.)

Feb. 11. *Wednesday.* The meadows, flooded by the thaw of the last half of last week and Sunday, are now frozen hard enough to bear, and it is excellent skating.

Near the other swamp white oak on Shattuck's piece I found another caterpillar on the ice. From its position I thought it *possible* that it had been washed from its winter quarters by the freshet, and so left on top of the ice. It was not frozen in, and may have been blown from the oak. It was of a different species from that of January 8th, about one and one tenth inches long, with but little fuzziness, black with three longitudinal buff stripes, the two lateral quite pale, and a black head; the foremost feet black, the others lighter-colored. It was frozen quite stiffly, as many tested, being curled up like the other, and I did not dare to bend it hard for fear of breaking it, even after I took it out in the house. But being placed on the mantelpiece it soon became relaxed, and in fifteen minutes began to crawl.

Feb. 12. 7.30 A. M. — The caterpillar, which I placed last night on the snow beneath the thermometer, is frozen stiff again, this time not being curled up, the temperature being $-6°$ now. Yet, being placed on the mantelpiece, it thaws and begins to crawl in five or ten minutes, before the rear half of its body is limber. Perhaps they were revived last week, when the thermometer stood at 52 and 53.

To Worcester.

I observe that the Nashua in Lancaster has already

fallen about three feet, as appears by the ice on the trees, walls, banks, etc., though the main stream of the Concord has not begun to fall at all. (It is hardly fallen perceptibly when I return on the 14th. Am not sure it has.) The former is apparently mostly open, the latter all closed.

When I skated on the 11th I saw several pretty large open spaces on the meadow, notwithstanding that the boys had begun to skate on the meadow the 10th and it had been steadily growing colder, and the ice was on the 11th from two and a half to three inches thick generally. These open spaces were evidently owing to the strong wind of the night before, and which was then blowing, but I neglected to observe what peculiarity there was in the locality. Perhaps it was very shallow with an uneven bottom.

Feb. 14. Higginson told me yesterday of a large tract near Fayal and near Pico (Mountain), covered with the reindeer (?) (as I suggested and he assented) lichens, very remarkable and desolate, extending for miles, the effect of an earthquake, which will in course of time be again clothed with a larger vegetation. Described at length remarkable force of the wind on the summit of Pico. Told of a person in West Newbury, who told him that he once saw the moon rising out of the sea from his house in that place, and on the moonlight in his room the distinct shadow of a vessel which was somewhere on the sea between him and the moon!!

It is a fine, somewhat springlike day. The ice is

softening so that skates begin to cut in, and numerous caterpillars are now *crawling* about on the ice and snow, the thermometer in the shade north of house standing 42°. So it appears that they must often thaw in the course of the winter, and find nothing to eat.

Feb. 15. About the 1st of January, when I was surveying the Lee farm, Captain Elwell, the proprietor, asked me how old I thought the house was.

I looked into Shattuck's History and found that, according to him, "*Henry Woodhouse*, or Woodis, as his name was sometimes written, came to Concord from London, about 1650, freeman 1656. His farm, estimated at three hundred and fifty acres, lay between the two rivers, and descended to his son-in-law, Joseph Lee, whose posterity successively held it for more than one hundred years. . . . He d[ied] June 16, 1701." (*Vide* page 389.)

Shattuck says that the principal sachem of our Indians, Tahattawan, lived "near Nahshawtuck hill." Shattuck (page 28) says that the celebrated Waban originally lived in Concord, and he describes Squaw Sachem and John Tahattawan, son of Tahattawan, as Musketaquid Indians. In 1684 "Mantatukwet, a Christian Indian of Natick, aged 70 years or thereabouts," according to the Register at Cambridge, deposed "that about 50 years since he lived within the bounds of that place which is now called Concord, at the foot of an hill, named Nahshawtuck, now in the possession of Mr. Henry Woodis," etc. (page 7). A vote

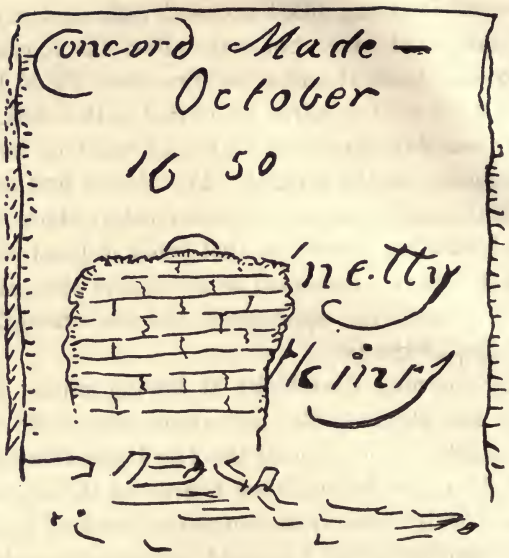
of Henry Woodies in 1654 is mentioned. Under date 1666, Shattuck finds in the South Quarter, among the names of the town at that time, "Henry Woodhouse 1 [lot] 360 [acres]," etc.

When I returned from Worcester yesterday morning, I found that the Lee house, of which six weeks ago I made an accurate plan, had been completely burned up the evening before, *i. e.* the 13th, while I was lecturing in Worcester. (It took fire and came near being destroyed in the night of the previous December 18th, early in morning. I was the first to get there *from town.*) In the course of the forenoon of yesterday I walked up to the site of the house, whither many people were flocking, on foot and in carriages. There was nothing of the house left but the chimneys and cellar walls. The eastern chimney had fallen in the night. On my way I met Abel Hunt, to whom I observed that it was perhaps the oldest house in town. "No," said he, "they saw the date on it during the fire, — 1707." When I arrived I inquired where the date had been seen, and read it for myself on the chimney, but there was too much smouldering fire to permit of my approaching it nearly.

I was interested in the old elm near the southeast corner of the house, which I found had been a mere shell a few years since, now filled up with brick. Flood, who has lived there, told me that Wheeler asked his advice with regard to that tree, — whether he could do better than lay the axe at its root. F. told him that he had seen an ash in the old country which was in the same condition, and is a tenderer tree than an "elum,"

preserved by being filled up, and with masonry, and then cemented over. So, soon after, the mason was set to work upon it under his directions, Flood having scraped out all the rotten wood first with a hoe. The cavity was full three feet wide and eight or ten high commencing at the ground. The mason had covered the bricks and rounded off with mortar, which he had scored with his trowel so that [one] did not observe but it was bark. It seemed an admirable plan, and not only improved the appearance but the strength and durability of the tree.

This morning (the 15th), it having rained in the night, and thinking the fire would be mostly out, I made haste to the ruins of the Lee house to read that inscription. By laying down boards on the bricks and cinders, which were quite too hot to tread on and covered a smothered fire, I was able to reach the chimney. The inscription was on the east side of the east chimney (which had fallen), at the bottom, in a cupboard on the west side of the late parlor, which was on a level with the ground on the east and with the cellar on the extreme west and the cellar kitchen on the north. There was a narrow lower (milk) cellar south and southeast of it, and an equally lower and narrower cellar east of it, under the parlor. This side of the chimney was perhaps fifteen feet from the east side of the house and as far from the north side. The inscription was in a slight recess in the chimney three feet four inches wide and a little more in height up and down, as far as I could see into the pile of bricks, thus:—



It appeared to have been made by the finger or a stick, in the mortar when fresh, which had been spread an inch to an inch and a quarter thick over the bricks, and, where it was too dry and hard, to have been pecked with the point of a trowel. The first three words and the "16" were perfectly plain, the "5" was tolerably plain, though some took it for a three, but I could *feel* it yet more distinctly. The mortar was partly knocked off the rest, apparently by this fire, but the top of some capital letter like a "C," and the letters "netty" were about as plain as represented, and the rest looked like "Henry" (Woodhouse?) or "l (t?) kinry" (?) the "y" (?) at end being crowded for want of room next the side. These last two words *quite* uncertain. The surface of

this recess was slightly swelling or bulging, somewhat like the outside of an oven, and above it the chimney was sloped and rounded off to the narrower shaft of it. The letters were from two and one half to three inches long and one eighth to one half inch deep.

This chimney, as well as the more recent westerly one, had been built chiefly with clay mortar, and I brought away a brick, of a soft kind, eight and seven eighths inches — some nine — long, four and one fourth plus wide, varying one fourth, and two and one half thick, though there were some much smaller near it, probably not so old. The clay (for mortar) was about as hard as mortar on it. The mortar in which the inscription was made contained considerable straw (?) and some *lumps* of clay, now crumbling like sand, with the lime and sand. The outside was white, but the interior ash-colored.

I discovered that the mortar of the inscription was not so old as the chimney, for the bricks beneath it, over which it was spread, were covered with soot, uniformly to the height of seven or eight feet, and the mortar fell off with an eighth of an inch thickness of this soot adhering to it, as if the recess had been a fireplace mortared over.

I have just been reading the account of Dr. Ball's sufferings on the White Mountains. Of course, I do not wonder that he was lost. I should say: Never undertake to ascend a mountain or thread a wilderness where there is any danger of being lost, without taking thick clothing, partly india-rubber, if not a tent or material for one; the best map to be had and a compass;

salt pork and hard-bread and salt; fish-hooks and lines; a good jack-knife, at least, if not a hatchet, and perhaps a gun; matches in a vial stopped water-tight; some strings and paper. Do not take a dozen steps which you could not with tolerable accuracy protract on a chart. I never do otherwise. Indeed, you must have been living all your life in some such methodical and assured fashion, though in the midst of cities, else you will be lost in spite of all this preparation.

HOW TO CATCH A PIG

If it is a wild shoat, do not let him get scared; shut up the dogs and keep mischievous boys and men out of the way. Think of some suitable inclosure in the neighborhood, no matter if it be a pretty large field, if it chances to be tightly fenced; and with the aid of another prudent person give the pig all possible opportunities to enter it. Do not go very near him nor appear to be driving him, only let him avoid you, persuade him to prefer that inclosure. If the case is desperate and it is necessary, you may make him think that you wish him to [go] anywhere else but into that field, and he will be pretty sure to go there. Having got him into that inclosure and put up the fence, you can contract it at your leisure. When you have him in your hands, if he is obstinate, do not try to drive him with a rope round one leg. Spare the neighbors' ears and your pig's feelings, and put him into a cart or wheelbarrow.

The brick above described appears to be of the same size with those of Governor Craddock's house in Med-

ford, said to have been built in 1634 and measured by Brooks. (*Vide* Book of Facts.)

It is remarkable that though Elwell, the last occupant of this house, never has seen this inscription, it being in this obscure nook in the cellar, the inscriber's purpose is served, for now nothing stands but the other chimney and the foundation of this, and the inscription is completely exposed to the daylight and to the sun, and far more legible even a rod or two off than it could have been when made. There it is, staring all visitors in the face, on that clear space of mortar just lifted above the mouldering ruins of the chimney around it. Yesterday you could not get within a rod of it, but distinctly read it over the furnace of hot bricks and coals.

I brought away a brick and a large flake of the mortar with letters on it, but it crumbled in my hands, and I was reminded of the crumbling of some of the slabs of Nineveh in the hands of Layard as soon as brought to light, and felt a similar grief because I could not transport it entire to a more convenient place than that scorching pile, or even lay the crumbling mass down, without losing forever the outlines and the significance of those yet undeciphered words. But I laid it down, of necessity, and that was the end of it. There was our sole Nineveh slab, perhaps the oldest *engraving* in Concord.[1]

Webster prided himself on being the first *farmer* in the south parish of Marshfield, but if he was the first they must have been a sorry set, for his farming was a complete failure. It cost a great deal more than it

[1] No; some gravestones are undoubtedly older.

came to. He used other people's capital, and was insolvent when he died, so that his friends and relatives found it difficult to retain the place, if indeed they have not sold it. How much cheaper it would have been for the town or county to have maintained him in the almshouse than as a farmer at large! How many must have bled annually to manure his broad potato-fields, who without inconvenience could have contributed sufficient to maintain him in the almshouse!

Feb. 16. 8 A. M. — To Lee house site again.

It was a rough-cast house when I first knew it. The fire still glowing among the bricks in the cellar. Richard Barrett says he remembers the inscription and the date 1650, but not the rest distinctly. I find that this recess was not in the cellar, but on the west side of the parlor, which was on the same level with the upper cellar at the west end of the house. It was on the back side of a cupboard (in that parlor), which was a few inches deep at the bottom and sloped back to a foot perhaps at top, or on the brick jog three inches at bottom and five and a half at top, and had shelves. The sitting-room of late was on the same level, the west side of this chimney.

The old part of the chimney, judging from the clay and the size of the brick, was seven feet wide east and west and about ten north and south. There was the back side of an old oven visible on the south side (late the front of the house) under the stairs (that had been), which had been filled up with the large bricks in clay.

The chimney above and behind the oven and this recess had been filled in with great stones, many much bigger than one's head, packed in clay mixed with the coarsest meadow-hay. Sometimes there were masses of pure clay and hay a foot in diameter. There was a very great proportion of the hay, consisting of cut-grass, three-sided carex, ferns, and still stouter woody stems, apparently a piece of corn-husk one inch wide and several long. And impressions in the clay of various plants, — grasses, ferns, etc., — exactly like those in coal in character. These are perhaps the oldest pressed plants in Concord. I have a mass eight or nine inches in diameter which is apparently one third vegetable. About these stones there is generally only the width (four and one quarter inches) of one brick, so that the chimney was a mere shell.

Though the inscription was in a coarse mortar mixed with straw, the sooty bricks over which it was spread were laid in a better mortar, without straw, and yet the mass of the bricks directly above this recess, in the chimney, were all laid in *clay*. Perhaps they had used plastering *there* instead of clay because it was a fireplace. A thin coating of whiter and finer mortar or plastering without straw had been spread over the sloping and rounded chimney above the recess and on each side and below it, and this covered many small bricks mingled with the large ones, and though this looked more modern, the straw-mixed mortar of the inscription overlapped at the top about a foot, proving the coarser mortar the more recent.

The inscription, then, was made after the chimney

was built, when some alteration was made, and a small brick had come to be used. Yet so long ago that straw was mixed with the mortar.

If that recess was an old fireplace, then, apparently, the first house fronted east, for the oven was on the south side.

A boy who was at the fire said to me, "This was the chimney in which the cat was burned up; she ran into a stove, and we heard her cries in the midst of the fire." Parker says there was no cat; she was drowned.

According to Shattuck, Johnson, having the period from 1645 to 1650 in view, says of Concord that it *had* been more populous. "The number of families at present are about 50. Their buildings are conveniently placed, chiefly in one straite street under a sunny banke in a low level," etc. (History, page 18.)

According to Shattuck (page 14), Governor Winthrop "selected (judiciously, I think) a lot in Concord [apparently in 1638],[1] which 'he intended to build upon,' near where Captain Humphrey Hunt now lives."

I was contending some time ago that our meadows must have been wetter once than they now are, else the trees would have got up there more. I see that Shattuck says under 1654 (page 33), "The meadows were somewhat drier, and ceased to be a subject of frequent complaint."

According to Wood's "New England's Prospect," the first settlers of Concord for meat bought "venison or rockoons" of the Indians. The latter must have been common then. The wolves robbed them of their swine.

[1] [Brackets in original journal.]

A wonderfully warm day (the third one); about 2 P. M., thermometer in shade 58.

I perceive that some, commonly talented, persons are enveloped and confined by a certain crust of manners, which, though it may sometimes be a fair and transparent enamel, yet only repels and saddens the beholder, since by its rigidity it seems to repress all further expansion. They are viewed as at a distance, or like an insect under a tumbler. They have, as it were, prematurely hardened both seed and shell, and this has severely taxed, if not put a period to, the life of the plant. This is to stand upon your dignity.

Genius has evanescent boundaries, like an altar from which incense rises.

The former are, after all, but hardened sinners in a mild sense. The pearl is a hardened sinner. Manners get to be human parchment, in which sensible books are often bound and honorable titles engrossed, though they may be very stiff and dry.

Feb. 17. Thermometer at 1 P. M., 60°.

The river is fairly breaking up, and men are out with guns after muskrats, and even boats. Some are apprehending loss of fruit from this warm weather. It is as open as the 3d of April last year, at least.

P. M. — To the old Hunt house.

The bricks of the old chimney which has the date on it vary from eight to eight and one half inches in length, but the oldest in the chimney in the rear part are nine to nine and one fourth long by four and one fourth plus wide and two and one fourth to two and one half

thick. This the size also of the bricks in clay behind the boarding of the house. There is straw in the clay and also in the lime used as plastering in both these chimneys. That on the first has a singular blue color. This house is about forty-nine feet on the front by twenty. The middle of door about twenty-five and a half feet from east end. House from fourteen to fifteen feet high. There was a door at the west end within Abel Hunt's remembrance; you can see where. The rear part has a wholly oak frame, while the front is pine. But I doubt if it is older, because the boards on the main part are feather-edged even within this part, as if they had once been on the outside. E. Hosmer says that his father said that Dr. Lee told him that he put on the whole upper, *i. e.* third, story of the Lee house. Says his old house where Everett lives was dated 1736.

Feb. 18. Another remarkably warm and pleasant day. The nights of late nearly as warm as the day. When I step out into the yard I hear that earliest spring note from some bird, perhaps a pigeon woodpecker (or can it be a nuthatch, whose ordinary note I hear?), the rapid *whar whar, whar whar, whar whar,* which I have so often heard before any other note.[1]

The snow is nearly all gone, and it is so warm and springlike that I walk over to the hill, listening for spring birds. The roads are beginning to be settled. I step excited over the moist mossy ground, dotted with the green stars of thistles, crowfoot, etc., the outsides of which are withered.

[1] *Vide* Mar. 18th.

Amid the pitch pines by the hemlocks I am surprised to find a great mildew on the ground, three or four feet long by two and a half wide and one fourth to one inch thick, investing the pine-needles and grass stubble and fallen hemlock twigs, like a thick cobweb or veil, through which the ground, etc., is seen dimly. It has a regular vegetable or lichen-like border, creeping outward from a centre, and is more cottony and fibrous there. Like the ground generally thereabouts, it has an inspiring sweet, musty scent when I stoop close to it. I was surprised to find how sweet the whole ground smelled when I lay flat and applied my nose to it; more so than any cow; as it were the promise of the perfect man and new springs to eternity. The mildew apparently occupied the place where a mass of snow ice rested yesterday (it was not yet wholly gone on one side). It was the snow-bank's footprint, or rather its *plantain*. One of the first growths of the new year, surely. Further in the pines there was more of it wherever the snow had but just disappeared, a great many square rods of it all put together. But also there was, very similar to it, yet only a thin veil, the apparent gossamer of spring and fall, close to the edge of the melting snow, and I saw a spider or two. This had only the thickness of a cobweb and was covered with dew, yet was rather hard to distinguish from the mildew. Thin cobwebs were very widely dispersed in the meadows where the snow had just melted.[1]

I *thought* at one time that I heard a bluebird. Hear a fly buzz amid some willows.

[1] *Vide* next page [below]. *Vide* Mar. 4, 1860.

Thermometer at 1 P. M., 65.

Sophia says that Mrs. Brooks's spiræas have started considerably!

I hear that geese went over Cambridge last night.

I sit all this day and evening without a fire, and some even have windows open.

P. M. — To Hubbard's Bath.

The frost out of the ground and the ways settled in many places. I see much more of that gossamer (?) of the morning, — still regarding the large mildew as different. It abounds in all low grounds where there is a firm pasture sod, where a snow-bank has just melted or on the edge of one that is fast disappearing. I observe some remarkable ones on Hubbard's land just below the mountain sumachs. They are thin webs over the grass just laid bare close to the snow commonly and over the icy edge of the snow. They are not under the snow. I thought at first it had been formed on the surface of the snow and when it melted rested lightly on the stubble beneath, but I could detect none extending more than three or four inches over the icy edge of the snow, though every stubble half exposed amid the snow even was the source or *point d'appui* of some. Sometimes, to my surprise, it was an extremely thin, but close-woven (?), perhaps air-tight veil, of the same color but still thinner than the thinnest tissue paper or membrane, in patches one to three feet in diameter, resting lightly on the stubble, which supports it in the form of little tents. This is now dry and very brittle, yet I can get up pieces an inch across. It suggests even a scum on the edge of the melting snow, which has

at last dried and hardened into a web. Here is one which, as commonly, springs from three or four inches within the melted snow, partly resting close and flat upon it, and extends thence several feet from its edge over the stubble. None of these have the thickness of mildew, and for cobwebs I see but two or three spiders about and cannot believe that they can have done all this in one night, nor do they make a close web. It lies lightly upon the stubble and the edge of the snow, as if it had settled in the night from the atmosphere. Can it be a scum formed on the melting snow, caught at last on the stubble like the pap of paper taken up in a sieve? Further off on every side I see the same now fretted away, like a coarse and worn-out sieve, where it was perfect perhaps yesterday.

Thus it lasts all day, conspicuous many rods off. I think there must be a square mile of this, at least, in Concord. It is after a very warm, muggy, but fair night, the last snow going off and the thermometer at 50°. Thinnest, frailest, gossamer veils dropped from above on the stubble, as if the fairies had dropped their veils or handkerchiefs after a midnight revel, rejoicing at the melting of the snow.

What can it be? Is it animal or vegetable? I suspect it is allied to mould; or is it a scum? or have the spiders anything to do with it? It suggests even a nebulous vegetable matter in the air, which, under these circumstances, in a muggy night, is condensed into this primitive vegetable form. Is it a sort of *flowing* of the earth, a waste fertility anticipating the more regular growths of spring?

Has not some slightly glutinous substance been deposited from the atmosphere on the snow, which is thus collected into a thin sort of paper, even like the brown-paper conferva? Is it a species of conferva?

I am excited by this wonderful air and go listening for the note of the bluebird or other comer. The very grain of the air seems to have undergone a change and is ready to split into the form of the bluebird's warble. Methinks if it were visible, or I could cast up some fine dust which would betray it, it would take a corresponding shape. The bluebird does not come till the air consents and his wedge will enter easily. The air over these fields is a foundry full of moulds for casting bluebirds' warbles.[1] Any sound uttered now would take that form, not of the harsh, vibrating, rending scream of the jay, but a softer, flowing, curling warble, like a purling stream or the lobes of flowing sand and clay. Here is the soft air and the moist expectant apple trees, but not yet the bluebird. They do not quite attain to song.

What a poem is this of spring, so often repeated! I am thrilled when I hear it spoken of, — as the *spring* of such a year, that fytte of the glorious epic.

Picked up a mouse-nest in the stubble at Hubbard's mountain sumachs, left bare by the melting snow. It is about five inches wide and three or four high, with one, if not two, small round indistinct entrances on the side, not very obvious till you thrust your finger through them and press aside the fine grass that closes them, ready to yield to the pressure of the mouse's body. It

[1] [Channing, pp. 78, 79.]

is made very firmly and round, far more so than an oven-bird's nest, of the rye and grass stubble which was at hand under the snow, gnawed off to convenient lengths. A very snug and warm nest, where several might have lain very cosily under the snow in the hardest winter. Near by were collected many large green droppings of the usual form, as if for cleanliness, several feet off. Many galleries were visible close to the ground, in the withered grass under the snow. Is it not the nest of a different mouse from the *Mus leucopus* of the woods?

Mr. Prichard says that when he first came to Concord wood was $2.50 per cord. Father says that good wood was $3.00 per cord, and he can remember the longest; white pine, $2.00; maple, sixteen shillings.

When I approached the bank of a ditch this afternoon, I saw a frog diving to the bottom. The warmer water had already awaked him, and perhaps he had been sitting on the bank.

The above-described gossamer often has small roundish spots on it, two or three inches in diameter, which are whiter and much thicker, even like the silvery scales under which some kinds of insects lurk, somewhat. I see none of this over sand or in the road, as I suppose would be the case if it were a mere scum on the snow, or a deposition from the atmosphere. Must it not be of the nature of mildew? It is as if it were a thin and tender membrane that envelops the infant earth in earliest spring, at once rent and dissipated.

Feb. 19. Cloudy and somewhat rainy, the thermometer at last fallen to thirty-two and thirty-three degrees.

I have often noticed that the surface of the snow was rippled or waved like water. The dust from plowed ground collects on the ridges which bound these waves, and there it becomes very conspicuous as the snow melts, the ridges standing out more and more, for the dirt apparently protects the snow from the sun. Why do water and snow take just this form?

Some willow catkins have crept a quarter of an inch from under their scales and look very red, probably on account of the warm weather.

A man cannot be said to succeed in this life who does not satisfy one friend.

An old man, one of my neighbors, is so demented that he put both legs into one leg of his pantaloons the other morning!

Mr. Cheney tells me that Goodwin brought him a partridge to sell in the midst of the late severe weather. C. said it was a pity to kill it, it must find it hard to get a living. "I guess she did n't find it any harder than I do," answered G.

It would be pleasant to recall to mind the different styles of boats that have been used on this river from the first, beginning with the bark canoe and the dug-out, or log canoe, or pirogue. Then, perhaps, some simple log canoe, or such a boat as now prevails, which probably has its prototype on English rivers, — call it dory, skiff, or what-not, — made as soon as boards were sawed here; the smaller, punt-like ones for one man; the round-bottomed boats from below, and the

half-round or lapstreaked, sometimes with sails; the great canal-boats; and the hay-boats of the Sudbury meadows; and lastly what the boys call "shell-boats," introduced last year, in imitation of the Esquimau kayack.

At evening it begins to snow, and —

(*Feb.* 20) this morning the ground is once more covered about one inch deep.

Minott says that the house he now lives in was framed and set up by Captain Isaac Hoar just beyond the old house by Moore's, this side the one he was born in, his mother's (?) house (whose well is that buried by Alcott on the sidewalk), and there the frame stood several years, Hoar having gone off, he thinks, to Westminster. (M. helped a man take down its chimney when he was a boy; it was very old, laid in clay.) He was quite a lad and used to climb up on the frame and, with a teaspoon, take the eggs of the house wren out of the mortise-holes. At last his grandfather, Dr. Abel Prescott, "an eminent physitian," bought it and moved it to where it now stands, and died in [it] in 1805, aged eighty-eight (born 1717). Said he died exactly where I sat, and the bed stood so and so, north and south from the clock. This Dr. Prescott had once probably lived with his nephew Willoughby Prescott, where Loring's is. After, when married, lived in the old rough-cast house near the poorhouse where Minott's mother was born. It was Dr. Abel P.'s son Abel (Minott's uncle) who rode into Concord before the British. Minott's father was rich, and died early in the army, Aunt says.

Minott always sits in the corner behind the door, close to the stove, with commonly the cat by his side, often in his lap. Often he sits with his hat on. He says that Frank Buttrick (who for a great many years worked at carpentering for John Richardson, and was working for him when he died) told him that Richardson called him when he was at the point of death and told him that he need not stop working on account of his death, but he might come in to the prayer if he wished to. R. is spoken of as a strong and resolute man.

I wish that there was in every town, in some place accessible to the traveller, instead [of] or beside the common directories, etc., a list of the worthies of the town, *i. e.* of those who are *worth* seeing.

Miss Minott has several old pieces of furniture that belonged to her grandfather Prescott, one a desk made for him and marked 1760. She said the looking-glass was held oldest furniture, she thought. It has the name John scratched on the middle by a madcap named John Bulkley from college, who had got so far with a diamond before he was stopped.

Beverley, after describing the various kinds of fowl that frequented the shores of Virginia, "not to mention beavers, otters, musk rats, minxes," etc., etc., says, "Although the inner lands want these benefits (which, however, no pond or plash is without)," etc. I admire the offhand way of describing the superfluous fertility of the land and water.

What is the relation between a bird and the ear that appreciates its melody, to whom, perchance, it is more

charming and significant than to any else? Certainly they are intimately related, and the one was made for the other. It is a natural fact. If I were to discover that a certain kind of stone by the pond-shore was affected, say partially disintegrated, by a particular natural sound, as of a bird or insect, I see that one could not be completely described without describing the other. I am that rock by the pond-side.

What is hope, what is expectation, but a seed-time whose harvest cannot fail, an irresistible expedition of the mind, at length to be victorious?

Feb. 21. The puffball is used by doctors to stop bleeding. Has not this property to do with its power of repelling moisture? Some have now almost entirely lost their dust, leaving a dry almost woolly substance. Am surprised to see this afternoon a boy collecting red maple sap from some trees behind George Hubbard's. It runs freely. The earliest sap I made to flow last year was March 14th. It must be owing to the warm weather we have had.

The river for some days has been open and its sap visibly flowing, like the maple.

Feb. 22. P. M. — To Dugan Desert.

The Tommy Wheeler house, like the Hunt house, has the sills projecting inside. Its bricks are about the same size with those of the Lee chimney; they are eight and three quarters to nine inches long by four and a half, but not in clay. A part at least of the back side has bricks on their edges in clay, as at the Hunt house, and there

are bricks in clay flat on the plate, close under roof at the eaves. I think that by the size of the bricks you cannot tell the age of an *old* house within fifty years.

Feb. 23. P. M. — See two yellow-spotted tortoises in the ditch south of Trillium Wood. You saunter expectant in the mild air along the soft edge of a ditch filled with melted snow and paved with leaves, in some sheltered place, yet perhaps with some ice at one end still, and are thrilled to see stirring amid the leaves at the bottom, sluggishly burying themselves from your sight again, these brilliantly spotted creatures. There are commonly two, at least. The tortoise is stirring in the ditches again. In your latest spring they still look incredibly strange when first seen, and not like cohabitants and contemporaries of yours.

I say in my thought to my neighbor, who was once my friend, "It is of no use to speak the truth to you, you will not hear it. What, then, shall I say to you?" At the instant that I seem to be saying farewell forever to one who has been my friend, I find myself unexpectedly near to him, and it is our very nearness and dearness to each other that gives depth and significance to that forever. Thus I am a helpless prisoner, and these chains I have no skill to break. While I think I have broken one link, I have been forging another.

I have not yet known a friendship to cease, I think. I fear I have experienced its decaying. Morning, noon, and night, I suffer a physical pain, an aching of the breast which unfits me for my tasks. It is perhaps most intense at evening. With respect to Friendship I feel

like a wreck that is driving before the gale, with a crew suffering from hunger and thirst, not knowing what shore, if any, they may reach, so long have I *breasted* the conflicting waves of this sentiment, my seams open, my timbers laid bare. I float on Friendship's sea simply because my specific gravity is less than its, but no longer that stanch and graceful vessel that careered so buoyantly over it. My planks and timbers are scattered. At most I hope to make a sort of raft of Friendship, on which, with a few of our treasures, we may float to some firm land.

That aching of the breast, the grandest pain that man endures, which no ether can assuage.

You cheat me, you keep me at a distance with your manners. I know of no other dishonesty, no other devil. Why this doubleness, these compliments? They are the worst of lies. A lie is not worse between traders than a compliment between friends. I would not, I cannot speak. I will let you *feel* my thought, my feeling.

Friends! they are united for good and for evil. They can delight each other as none other can. They can distress each other as none other can. Lying on lower levels is but a trivial offense compared with civility and compliments on the level of Friendship.

I visit my friend for joy, not for disturbance. If my coming hinders him in the least conceivable degree, I will exert myself to the utmost to stay away, I will get the Titans to help me stand aloof, I will labor night and day to construct a rampart between us. If my coming casts but the shadow of a shadow before it, I will retreat swifter than the wind and more untrackable. I will be

gone irrevocably, if possible, before he fears that I am coming.

If the teeth ache they can be pulled. If the heart aches, what then? Shall we pluck it out?

Must friends then expect the fate of those Oriental twins, — that one shall at last bear about the corpse of the other, by that same ligature that bound him to a living companion?

Look before you leap. Let the isthmus be cut through, unless sea meets sea at exactly the same level, unless a perfect understanding and equilibrium has been established from the beginning around Cape Horn and the unnamed northern cape. What a tumult! It is Atlantic and Atlantic, or it is Atlantic and Pacific.

What mean these turtles, these coins of the muddy mint issued in early spring? The bright spots on their backs are vain unless I behold them. The spots *seem* brighter than ever when first beheld in the spring, as does the bark of the willow.

I have seen signs of the spring. I have seen a frog swiftly sinking in a pool, or where he dimpled the surface as he leapt in. I have seen the brilliant spotted tortoises stirring at the bottom of ditches. I have seen the clear sap trickling from the red maple.

Feb. 24. A fine spring morning. The ground is almost completely bare again. There has been a frost in the night. Now, at 8.30, it is melted and wets my feet like a dew. The water on the meadow this still, bright morning is smooth as in April. I am surprised to hear the strain of a song sparrow from the riverside, and as

I cross from the causeway to the hill, thinking of the bluebird, I that instant hear one's note from deep in the softened air. It is already 40°, and by noon is between 50° and 60°. As the day advances I hear more bluebirds and see their azure flakes settling on the fence-posts. Their short, rich, crispy warble curls through the air. Its grain now lies parallel to the curve of the bluebird's warble, like boards of the same lot. It *seems* to be one of those early springs of which we have heard but have never experienced. Perhaps they are fabulous. I have seen the probings of skunks for a week or more. I now see where one has pawed out the worm-dust or other chankings from a hole in base of a walnut and torn open the fungi, etc., there, exploring for grubs or insects. They are very busy these nights.

If I should make the least concession, my friend would spurn me. I am obeying his law as well as my own.

Where is the actual friend you love? Ask from what hill the rainbow's arch springs! It adorns and crowns the earth.

Our friends are our kindred, of our species. There are very few of our species on the globe.

Between me and my friend what unfathomable distance! All mankind, like motes [?] and insects, are between us.

If my friend says in his mind, I will *never* see you again, I translate it of necessity into *ever*. That is its definition in Love's lexicon.

Those whom we can love, we can hate; to others we are indifferent.

P. M. — To Walden.

The railroad in the Deep Cut is dry as in spring, almost dusty. The best of the sand foliage is already gone. I walk without a greatcoat. A chickadee with its winter lisp flits over, and I think it is time to hear its *phebe* note, and that instant it pipes it forth. Walden is still covered with thick ice, though melted a foot from the shore.

The French (in the Jesuit Relations) say *fil de l'eau* for that part of the current of a river in which any floating thing would be carried, generally about equidistant from the two banks. It is a convenient expression, for which I think we have no equivalent.[1]

Get my boat out the cellar.

Feb. 25. I hear of lilac buds expanding, but have not looked at them. I go through the woods behind the Kettle place. The leaves rustle and look all dry on the ground in the woods, as if quite ready to burn. The flies buzz out of doors. Though I left my outside coat at home, this single thick one is too much. I go across the Great Fields to Peter's, but can see no ducks on the meadows. I suspect they have not come yet, in spite of the openness. The fragrant everlasting has retained its fragrance all winter. That mildew, or gossamer-like scum, of the 18th is still visible here and there. It is like very thin and frail isinglass. Goodwin says he saw a robin this morning. The thermometer is at 65° at noon.

[1] [Thoreau afterward used an English equivalent, "thread of the river." See *postea*. The term is given in the dictionaries, but may be more recent than Thoreau's time.]

Feb. 26. Cold and windy. The river fast going down. Paint the bottom of my boat.

What an accursed land, methinks unfit for the habitation of man, where the wild animals are monkeys!

I saw Mrs. Brooks's spiræas to-day grown half an inch (!!), whose starting I heard of on the 18th.[1]

Feb. 27. Before I opened the window this cold morning, I heard the peep of a robin, that sound so often heard in cheerless or else rainy weather, so often heard first borne on the cutting March wind or through sleet or rain, as if its coming were premature.

P. M. — To the Hill.

The river has skimmed over again in many places. I see many crows on the hillside, with their sentinel on a tree. They are picking the cow-dung scattered about, apparently for the worms, etc., it contains. They have done this in so many places that it looks as if the farmer had been at work with his maul. They must save him some trouble thus.[2] I see cinders two or three inches in diameter, apparently burnt clapboards, on the bank of the North River, which came from the burning Lee house! Yet it was quite a damp night, after rain in the afternoon, and rather still. They are all curled by the heat, so that you can tell which side was first exposed to it. The grain is more distinct than ever. Nature so abhors a straight line that she curls each cinder as she launches it on the fiery whirlwind. All the *light*ness and ethereal spirit of the wood is gone,

[1] *Vide* Mar. 4th.

[2] Notice the like extensively early in March, 1860.

and this black earthy residuum alone returned. The russet hillside is spotted with them. They suggest some affinity with the cawing crows.

I see some of those large purplish chocolate-colored puffballs. They grow in dry pastures. They are in various states. I do not understand their changes.[1] Some are quite pulverulent, and emitting a cloud of dust at every touch. Others present a firm, very light ash-colored surface above, in a shallow saucer, with a narrow, wrinkled, crenate border, and beneath this firm skin is a perfectly dry spongy mass, less ashy, more reddish than the last, and fibrous, with very little dust in it but many small ribbed grubs. The surface often looks as if it had been pecked by birds in search of these grubs. Sometimes there is, above the white skin of the saucer, considerable pulverulent substance, as if in the other case this had been dissipated. Sometimes two large ones are joined at the root. Was there any portion (now dissipated) above this light-colored skin? Did the portion beneath the skin originally contain more dust, which has escaped? Or will it yet come to dust?

Are not fungi the best hygrometers?

Feb. 28. Nearly two inches of snow in the night.

P. M. — To Lee's Cliff.

I see the track, apparently of a muskrat (?), — about five inches wide with very sharp and distinct trail of tail, — on the snow and thin ice over the little rill in

[1] See both these and *Lycoperdon stellatum* when ground is laid bare in spring, as about Mar. 1, 1860 (no account).

the Miles meadow. It was following up this rill, often not more than thrice as wide as itself, and sometimes its precise locality concealed under ice and snow, yet he kept exactly above it on the snow through all its windings, where it was open occasionally taking to the water and sometimes swimming under the ice a rod or two. It is interesting to see how every little rill like this will be haunted by muskrats or minks. Does the mink ever leave a track of its tail?

At the Cliff, the tower-mustard, early crowfoot, and perhaps buttercup appear to have started of late. It takes several years' faithful search to learn where to look for the earliest flowers.

It is a singular infatuation that leads men to become clergymen in regular, or even irregular, standing. I pray to be introduced to new men, at whom I may stop short and taste their peculiar sweetness. But in the clergyman of the most liberal sort I see no perfectly independent human nucleus, but I seem to see some indistinct scheme hovering about, to which he has lent himself, to which he belongs. It is a very fine cobweb in the lower stratum of the air, which stronger wings do not even discover. Whatever he may say, he does not know that one day is as good as another. Whatever he may say, he does not know that a man's creed can never be written, that there are no particular expressions of belief that deserve to be prominent. He dreams of a certain sphere to be filled by him, something less in diameter than a great circle, maybe not greater than a hogshead. All the staves are got out, and his sphere is already hooped. What's the use of talking to

him? When you spoke of sphere-music he thought only of a thumping on his cask. If he does n't know something that nobody else does, that nobody told him, then he 's a telltale. What great interval is there between him who is caught in Africa and made a plantation slave of in the South, and him who is caught in New England and made a Unitarian minister of? In course of time they will abolish the one form of servitude, and, not long after, the other. I do not see the necessity for a man's getting into a hogshead and so narrowing his sphere, nor for his putting his head into a halter. Here 's a man who can't butter his own bread, and he has just combined with a thousand like him to make a dipped toast for all eternity! [1]

Nearly one third the channel is open in Fair Haven Pond. The snow lies on the ice in large but very shallow drifts, shaped, methinks, much like the holes in ice, broad crescents (apparently) convex to the northwest.

[1] [Channing, p. 90.]

VIII

MARCH, 1857

(ÆT. 39)

March 2. At Cambridge. Very gusty day. An inch or two of snow falls, — all day about it, — and strangely blown away.

March 3. P. M. —To Fair Haven Hill.

3 P. M., 24° in shade. The red maple sap, which I first noticed the 21st of February, is now frozen up in the auger-holes and thence down the trunk to the ground, except in one place where the hole was made in the south side of the tree, where it is melted and is flowing a little. Generally, then, when the thermometer is thus low, say below freezing-point, it does not thaw in the auger-holes. There is no expanding of buds of any kind, nor early birds, to be seen. Nature was thus premature — anticipated her own revolutions — with respect to the sap of trees, the buds (spiræa at least), and birds. The warm spell ended with February 26th.

The crust of yesterday's snow has been converted by the sun and wind into flakes of thin ice from two or three inches to a foot in diameter, scattered like a mackerel sky over the pastures, as if all the snow had been blown out from beneath. Much of this thin ice is partly opaque and has a glutinous look even, reminding

me of frozen glue. Probably it has much dust mixed with it.

I go along below the north end of the Cliffs. The rocks in the usual place are buttressed with icy columns, for water in almost imperceptible quantity is trickling down the rocks. It is interesting to see how the dry black or ash-colored umbilicaria, which get a little moisture when the snow melts and trickles down along a seam or shallow channel of the rock, become relaxed and turn olive-green and enjoy their spring, while a few inches on each side of this gutter or depression in the face of the rock they are dry and crisp as ever. Perhaps the greater part of this puny rill is drunk up by the herbage on its brink.

These are among the consequences of the slight robin snow of yesterday. It is already mostly dissipated, but where a heap still lingers, the sun on the warm face of this cliff leads down a puny trickling rill, moistening the gutters on the steep face of the rocks where patches of umbilicaria lichens grow, of rank growth, but now thirsty and dry as bones and hornets' nests, dry as shells, which crackle under your feet. The more fortunate of these, which stand by the moistened seams or gutters of the rock, luxuriate in the grateful moisture — as in their spring. Their rigid nerves relax, they unbend and droop like limber infancy, and from dry ash and leather-color turn a lively olive-green. You can trace the course of this trickling stream over the rock through such a patch of lichens by the olive-green of the lichens alone.

Here and there, too, the same moisture refreshes and

brightens up the scarlet crowns of some little cocks-comb lichen, and when the rill reaches the perpendicular face of the cliff, its constant drip at night builds great organ-pipes of a ringed structure, which run together, buttressing the rock.

Skating yesterday and to-day.

March 5. P. M. — To Hill.

See the tracks of a woodchuck in the sand-heap about the mouth of his hole, where he has cleared out his entry. The red ground under a large pitch pine is strewn with scales of the ashy-brown bark over a diameter of ten or twelve feet, where some woodpecker has searched and hammered about the stem.

I scare up six male sheldrakes, with their black heads, in the Assabet, — the first ducks I have seen. Methought I heard a slight frog-like croak from them before.

The sap of the buttonwood flows; how long? The lilac buds cannot have swollen any since the 25th of February, on account of the cold. On examining, they look as if they had felt the influence of the previous heat a little. There are narrow light-green spaces laid bare along the edges of the brown scales, as if they had expanded so much.

This and the last four or five days very gusty. Most of the warmth of the fire is carried off by the draught, which consumes the wood very fast, faster than a much colder but still day in winter. My kindlings spend very fast now, for I do not commonly keep fire at night.

Thomas Morton in his "New English Canaan" has this epitaph on an infant that died apparently as soon as born, without being baptized: —

> "Underneath this heap of stones
> Lieth a parcel of small bones,
> What hope at last can such imps have,
> That from the womb go to the grave?"

Winckelmann in his "History of Ancient Art," vol. ii, page 27, says of Beauty, "I have meditated long upon it, but my meditations commenced too late, and in the brightest glow of mature life its essential has remained dark to me; I can speak of it, therefore, only feebly and spiritlessly." — Lodge's translation.

March 8. P. M. — To Hill.

When I cut a white pine twig the crystalline sap instantly exudes. How long has it been thus?

Get a glimpse of a hawk, the first of the season. The tree sparrows sing a little on this still sheltered and sunny side of the hill, but not elsewhere. A partridge goes off from amid the pitch pines. It lifts each wing so high above its back and flaps so low, and withal so rapidly, that they present the appearance of a broad wheel, almost a revolving sphere, as it whirs off like a cannon-ball shot from a gun.

Minott told me again the reason why the bushes were coming in so fast in the river meadows. Now that the mower takes nothing stronger than molasses and water, he darsn't meddle with anything bigger than a pipe-stem.

March 11. I see and talk with Rice, sawing off the ends of clapboards which he has planed, to make them square, for an addition to his house. He has got a fire in his shop, and plays at house-building there. His life is poetic. He does the work himself. He combines several qualities and talents rarely combined. Though he owns houses in the city, whose repair he attends to, finds tenants for them, and collects the rent, he also has his Sudbury farm and bean-fields. Though he lived in a city, he would still be natural and related to primitive nature around him. Though he owned all Beacon Street, you might find that his mittens were made of the skin of a woodchuck that had ravaged his bean-field, which he had cured. I noticed a woodchuck's skin tacked up to the inside of his shop. He said it had fatted on his beans, and William had killed [it] and expected to get another to make a pair of mittens of, one not being quite large enough. It was excellent for mittens. You could hardly wear it out.

Spoke of the cuckoo, which was afraid of the birds, was easily beaten; would dive right into the middle of a poplar, then come out on to some bare twig and look round for a nest to rob of young or eggs. Had noticed a pigeon woodpecker go repeatedly in a straight line from his nest in an apple tree to a distant brook-side in a meadow, dive down there, and in a few minutes return.

March 12. P. M. — To Hill.

Observe the waxwork twining about the smooth sumach. It winds against the sun. It is at first loose

about the stem, but this ere long expands to and overgrows it. Observed the track of a squirrel in the snow under one of the apple trees on the southeast side of the Hill, and, looking up, saw a red squirrel with a nut or piece of frozen apple (?) in his mouth, within six feet, sitting in a constrained position partly *crosswise* on a limb over my head, perfectly still, and looking not at me, but off into the air, evidently expecting to escape my attention by this trick. I stood and watched and chirruped to him about five minutes so near, and yet he did not at once turn his head to look at me or move a foot or wink. The only motion was that of his tail curled over his back in the wind. At length he did change his attitude a little and look at me a moment. Evidently this is a trick they often practice. If I had been farther off he might have scolded at me.

Snowed again last night, as it has done once or twice before within ten days without my recording it, — robin snows, which last but a day or two.

March 13. Thermometer this morning, about 7 A. M., 2°, and the same yesterday. This month has been windy and cold, a succession of snows one or two inches deep, soon going off, the spring birds all driven off. It is in strong contrast with the last month.

Captain E. P. Dorr of Buffalo tells me that there is a rise and fall daily of the lakes about two or three inches, not accounted for. A difference between the lakes and sea is that when there is no wind the former are quite smooth, no swell. Otherwise he thought that no one could tell whether he was on the lakes or the

ocean. Described the diver's descending one hundred and sixty-eight feet to a sunken steamer and getting up the safe after she had been sunk three years. Described the breeding of the capelin at Labrador, a small fish about as big as a sardine. They crowd along the shore in such numbers that he had seen a cartload crowded quite on to the shore high and dry by those in the rear.

Elliot, the botanist, says (page 184) that the *Lechea villosa* (*major* of Michaux), "if kept from running to seed, would probably form a very neat edging for the beds of a flower garden; the foliage of the radical branches is very handsome during the winter, and the size of the plant is well suited to such a purpose."

Rhus Toxicodendron (page 363): "The juice which exudes on plucking the leaf-stalks from the stem of the *R. radicans* is a good indelible dye for marking linen or cotton."

Of the *Drosera rotundifolia* (page 375), "This fluid never appears to fall from the hairs, but is secreted nearly in proportion to its evaporation, and the secretion is supposed to be greatest in dry clear weather;" hence called sundew. Howitt, in his "Boy's Adventures in Australia," says, "People here thought they had discovered large numbers of the graves of the blacks, lying lengthways, as amongst the whites, but these have turned out to be a natural phenomenon, and called Dead Men's Graves." The natives generally bury — when they do not burn — in a sitting posture. Is the country cold enough to allow these mounds to have been made by the ice?

March 14. A warmer day at last. It has been steadily cold and windy, with repeated light snows, since February 26th came in. This afternoon is comparatively warm, and the few signs of spring are more reliable.

I go down the bank of the river in the Great Meadows. Many of those small, slender insects, with long, narrow wings (some apparently of same species without), are crawling about in the sun on the snow and bark of trees, etc.

The maples, apple trees, etc., have been barked by the ice, and show light-colored bands one or two feet from the ground about their trunks. I find on examination that in these cases the bark has not been worn off by the floating ice rubbing against them, as happens when they are directly on the edge of the stream, for this light and barked surface occurs often when the trunk is surrounded by a hedge of sprouts or of other twigs only six inches distant, which show no marks of attrition; and the inner or true bark of the tree is not injured, only the thick epidermis or scaly outer bark has been detached, though that may have been very firmly attached to the trunk. The ice has evidently frozen to this, and when the water fell, has taken it off with itself; but the smaller twigs appear to have been [*sic*] and recovered again. Tough outer scales, which you could not possibly detach nor begin to detach with your hands, will be taken off quite clean, leaving exposed the yellowish surface of the inner bark.

I see that some white maple buds apparently opened a little in that warm spell before the 26th of February, for such have now a minute orifice at the apex, through which you can even see the anthers.

March 15. P. M. — To Hubbard's Close and Walden.

I see in the ditches in Hubbard's Close the fine green tips of spires of grass just rising above the surface of the water in one place, as if unwilling to trust itself to the frosty air. Favored by the warmth of the water and sheltered by the banks of the ditch, it has advanced thus far. But generally I see only the flaccid and floating frost-bitten tops of grass which apparently started that warm spell in February. The surface of the ditches is spotted with these pale and withered frost-bitten bladelets. It was the first green blush, as it were, — nay, it is purple or lake often, and a true blush, — of spring, of that *Indian spring* we had in February. An early dawn and premature blush of spring, at which I was not present. To be present at the instant when the springing grass at the bottoms of ditches lifts its spear above the surface and bathes in the spring air! Many a first faint crop mantling the pools thus early is mown down by the frost before the village suspects that vegetation has reawakened.

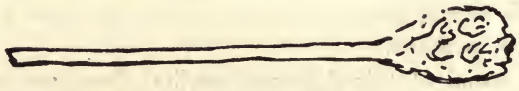
The trout darts away in the puny brook there so swiftly in a zigzag course that commonly I only see the ripple that he makes, in proportion, in this brook only a foot wide, like that made by a steamer in a canal. Or if I catch a glimpse of him before he buries himself in the mud, it is only a dark film without distinct outline. By his zigzag course he bewilders the eye, and avoids capture perhaps.

As usual at this date and earlier, there are a few square rods of green grass tufts at Brister's springs,

like a green fire under the pines and alders, and in one place an apparent growth of golden saxifrage.

At Heywood's Peak, I start partridges from the perfectly bare hillside. Such the spots they frequent at this season. I cross one of the bays of Walden, and might the middle.

By Thrush Alley, where they have been cutting more wood this winter, I see one of those beetles made of an oak excrescence, such as I have heard of, left by the chopper. The whole is a little over four feet long. The head nine or ten inches and the handle about three and a half feet, but all one piece. It was apparently of a young tree, or perhaps a limb, about four inches in diameter with a regular excrescence about it still, eight or nine inches in diameter. This head had been smoothed or trimmed and made more regular by the axe, cut off rather square at the end, and the lower part cut down to a handle of convenient size. And thus the chopper had made in a few moments in the woods a really efficient implement, with his axe only, out of some of the very wood he wished to split. A natural beetle. There was no danger that the handle would come off or the head crack. It needed no ringing. And thus he saved the head of his axe. We are singularly pleased and contented when a mere excrescence is thus converted into a convenient implement. Who was it, what satyr, that invented this rustic beetle? It was shaped:



An indispensable piece of woodcraft.

March 16. To Cambridge and Boston.

March 17. These days, beginning with the 14th, more springlike. Last night it rained a little, carrying off nearly all the little snow that remained, but this morning it is fair, and I hear the note of the woodpecker on the elms (that early note) and the bluebird again. Launch my boat.

No mortal is alert enough to be present at the first dawn of the spring, but he will presently discover some evidence that vegetation had awaked some days at least before. Early as I have looked this year, perhaps the first unquestionable growth of an indigenous plant detected was the fine tips of grass blades which the frost had killed, floating pale and flaccid, though still attached to their stems, spotting the pools like a slight fall or flurry of dull-colored snowflakes. After a few mild and sunny days, even in February, the grass in still muddy pools or ditches sheltered by the surrounding banks, which reflect the heat upon it, ventures to lift the points of its green phalanx into the mild and flattering atmosphere, advances rapidly from the saffron even to the rosy tints of morning. But the following night comes the frost, which, with rude and ruthless hand, sweeps the surface of the pool, and the advancing morning pales into the dim light of earliest dawn. I thus detect the first approach of spring by finding here and there its scouts and vanguard which have been slain by the rear-guard of retreating winter.

It is only some very early still, warm, and pleasant morning in February or March that I notice that wood-

pecker-like *whar-whar-whar-whar-whar-whar*, earliest spring sound.[1]

March 18. 9 A. M. — Up Assabet.

A still and warm but overcast morning, threatening rain. I now again hear the song sparrow's tinkle along the riverside, probably to be heard for a day or two, and a robin, which also has been heard a day or two. The ground is almost completely bare, and but little ice forms at night along the riverside.

I meet Goodwin paddling up the still, dark river on his first voyage to Fair Haven for the season, looking for muskrats and from time to time picking driftwood — logs and boards, etc. — out of the water and laying it up to dry on the bank, to eke out his wood-pile with. He says that the frost is not out so that he can lay wall, and so he thought he ['d] go and see what there was at Fair Haven. Says that when you hear a woodpecker's *rat-tat-tat-tat-tat* on a dead tree it is a sign of rain. While Emerson sits writing [in] his study this still, overcast, moist day, Goodwin is paddling up the still, dark river. Emerson burns twenty-five cords of wood and fourteen (?) tons of coal; Goodwin perhaps a cord and a half, much of which he picks out of the river. He says he 'd rather have a boat leak some for fishing. I hear the report of his gun from time to time for an hour, heralding the death of a muskrat and reverberating far down the river.

Goodwin had just seen Melvin disappearing up the North River, and I turn up thither after him. The

[1] *Vide* [p. 297].

ice-belt still clings to the bank on each side, a foot or more above the water, and is now fringed with icicles of various lengths, only an inch or two apart, where it is melting by day and dripping into the river. Being distinctly reflected, you think you see two, two feet apart, the water-line not being seen.

I land and walk half-way up the hill. A red squirrel runs nimbly before me along the wall, his tail in the air at a right angle with his body; leaps into a walnut and winds up his clock.

The reindeer lichens on the pitch pine plain are moist and flaccid. I hear the faint fine notes of apparent nuthatches coursing up the pitch pines, a pair of them, one answering to the other, as it were like a vibrating watch-spring. Then, at a distance, that *whar-whar-whar-whar-whar-whar*, which after all I suspect may be the note of the nuthatch and not a woodpecker. And now from far southward coming on through the air, the chattering of blackbirds, — probably red-wings, for I hear an imperfect *conqueree*. Also I hear the *chill-lill* or *tchit-a-tchit* of the slate-colored sparrow, and see it.

On the pitch pine plain, nearly the whole of a small turtle's egg, by the side of its excavated nest.

Save with my boat the dead top of (apparently) a pine, divested of its bark and bleached. Before the bark fell off it was curiously etched by worms in variously curved lines and half-circles, often with regular short recurving branches, thus:

Père Buteux, going on commission to the Attikamègues in 1651, describes a fall away up there, where

a river falls into a sort of trough or cradle a hundred paces long. "In this cradle the river boils (*bouillonne*) in such a fashion, that if you cast a stick (*baston*) into it, it remains some time without appearing, then all at once it elevates itself (*il s'élève en haut*) to the height of two pikes, at forty or fifty paces from the place where you cast it in."

It is to be observed that in the old deed of the Hunt farm, written in 1701, though the whole, consisting of something more than one hundred and fifty acres, is minutely described in thirteen different pieces, no part is described as woodland or wood-lot, only one piece as *partly unimproved.* This shows how little account was made of wood. Mr. Nathan Brooks reminds me that not till recently, *i. e.* not till within forty years, have wood-lots begun to be taxed for anything like their full value.

March 19. Heavy rain in the night and to-day, *i. e.* A. M. This, as usual, rapidly settles the ways, for, taking the frost out, the water that stood on the surface is soaked up, so that it is even drier and better walking before this heavy rain is over than it was yesterday before it began. It is April weather. I observed yesterday a dead shiner by the riverside, and to-day the first sucker.

March 20. Dine with Agassiz at R. W. E.'s. He thinks that the suckers die of asphyxia, having very large air-bladders and being in the habit of coming to the surface for air. But then, he is thinking of a

different phenomenon from the one I speak of, which last is confined to the very earliest spring or winter. He says that the *Emys picta* does not copulate till seven years old, and then does not lay till four years after copulation, or when eleven years old. The *Cistudo Blandingii* (which he has heard of in Massachusetts only at Lancaster) copulates at eight or nine years of age. He says this is not a *Cistudo* but an *Emys*. He has eggs of the *serpentina* from which the young did not come forth till the next spring. He thinks that the Esquimau dog is the only indigenous one in the United States. He had not observed the silvery appearance and the dryness of the lycoperdon fungus in water which I showed. He had broken caterpillars and found the crystals of ice in them, but had not thawed them. When I began to tell him of my experiment on a frozen fish, he said that Pallas had shown that fishes were frozen and thawed again, but I affirmed the contrary, and then Agassiz agreed with me. Says Aristotle describes the care the pouts take of their young. I told him of Tanner's account of it, the only one I had seen.

The river over the meadows again, nearly as high as in February, on account of rain of the 19th.

March 24. P. M. — Paddle up Assabet.

The water is fast going down. See a small water-bug. It is pretty still and warm. As I round the Island rock, a striped squirrel that was out [on] the steep polypody rock scampered up with a chuckle. On looking close, I see the crimson white maple stigmas [1] here

[1] *Vide* 27th.

and there, and some early alder catkins are relaxed and extended and almost shed pollen. I see many of those narrow four-winged insects (perla?) of the ice now fluttering on the water like ephemeræ. They have two pairs of wings indistinctly spotted dark and light.

Humphrey Buttrick says he saw two or three fish hawks down the river by Carlisle Bridge yesterday; also shot three black ducks and two green-winged teal, — though the latter had no green on their wings, it was rather the color of his boat, but Wesson assured him that so they looked in the spring. Buttrick had a double-barrelled gun with him, which he said he bought of a broker in Boston for five dollars! Thought it had cost eighteen dollars. He had read Frank Forester and believed him, and accordingly sent to New York and got one of Mullin's guns for sixty dollars. It was the poorest gun he ever had. He sold it for forty. As for cheap or old-fashioned guns bursting, there was Melvin; he had used his long enough, and it had not burst yet. He had given thirty-five dollars for it, say thirty years ago. Had had but one, or no other since.

If you are describing any occurrence, or a man, make two or more distinct reports at different times. Though you may think you have said all, you will to-morrow remember a whole new class of facts which perhaps interested most of all at the time, but did not present themselves to be reported. If we have recently met and talked with a man, and would report our experience, we commonly make a very partial report at first, failing to seize the most significant, picturesque, and dramatic points; we describe only what we have had time to

digest and dispose of in our minds, without being conscious that there were other things really more novel and interesting to us, which will not fail to recur to us and impress us suitably at last. How little that occurs to us in any way are we prepared at once to appreciate! We discriminate at first only a few features, and we need to reconsider our experience from many points of view and in various moods, to preserve the whole fruit of it.

Melvin's — and Minott's still more — is such a gun as Frank Forester says he would not fire for a hundred dollars, and yet Melvin has grown gray with using it; *i. e.*, he thinks that it would not be safe to fire a two-barrelled gun offered *new* for less than fifty dollars.

March 26. P. M. — To Walden and Fair Haven.

Though there has been quite a number of light snows, we have had no sleighing fairly since about February 14th. Walden is already on the point of breaking up. In the shallow bays it is melted six or eight rods out, and the ice looks dark and soft.

As I go through the woods by Andromeda Ponds, though it is rather cool and windy in exposed places, I hear a faint, stertorous croak from a frog in the open swamp; at first one faint note only, which I could not be sure that I had heard, but, after listening long, one or two more suddenly croaked in confirmation of my faith, and all was silent again. When first in the spring, as you walk over the rustling leaves amid bare and ragged bushes, you hear this at first faint, hard, dry, and short sound, it hardly sounds like the note of an

animal. It may have been heard some days.[1] I lay down on the fine, dry sedge in the sun, in the deep and sheltered hollow a little further on, and when I had lain there ten or fifteen minutes, I heard one fine, faint peep from over the windy ridge between the hollow in which I lay and the swamp, which at first I referred to a bird, and looked round at the bushes which crowned the brim of this hollow to find it, but ere long a regularly but faintly repeated *phe-phe-phe-phe* revealed the *Hylodes Pickeringii*. It was like the light reflected from the mountain-ridges within the shaded portions of the moon, — forerunner and herald of the spring.

At Well Meadow Head, am surprised to find the skunk-cabbage in flower, though the flower is very little exposed yet, and some still earlier have been killed by frost. Some of those cabbage buds are curved and short like the beak of a bird. The buds of the cowslip are very yellow, and the plant is not observed a rod off, it lies so low and close to the surface of the water in the meadow. It may bloom and wither there several times before villagers discover or suspect it. The chrysosplenium is very conspicuous and pretty now. This can afford to be forward, it lies so flat and unexposed.

Fair Haven is open; may have been open several days; there is only a little ice on the southeast shore. I sit on the high eastern bank. Almost every cistus stem has had its bark burst off and left hanging raggedly for an inch or more next the ground by the crystals

[1] The next day at 2.30 P. M., or about the same time, and about the same weather, our thermometer is at 48°.

which formed round it in the fall and winter, but some have escaped.

As I come out of the Spring Woods I see Abiel Wheeler planting peas and covering them up on his warm sandy hillside, in the hollow next the woods. It is a novel sight, that of the farmer distributing manure with a shovel in the fields and planting again. The earth looks warm and genial again. The sight of the earliest planting with carts in the field so lately occupied with snow is suggestive of the genialness of Nature. I could almost lie down in the furrow and be warmed into her life and growth.

Stopped at Farrar's little stithy. He is making two nuts to mend a mop with, and when at length he has forged and filed them and cut the thread, he remarks that it is a puttering job and worth a good deal more than he can charge. He has sickness in the house, a daughter in consumption, which he says is a flattering disease, up one day and down the next. Seeing a monstrous horseshoe nailed against his shop inside, with a little one within it, I asked what that was for. He said that he made the big one when he was an apprentice (of three months' standing) for a sign, and he picked up the little one the other day in the road and put it within it for the contrast. But he thought that the big one was hardly too big for one of the fore feet of the horse Columbus, which he had seen.

The first croaking frogs, the hyla, the white maple blossoms, the skunk-cabbage, and the alder's catkins are observed about the same time.

I saw one hazel catkin much elongated and relaxed.

It is surprising always to see this on dry plains or banks where there is so little evidence of life beside.

Farrar spoke of horses driven "tantrum."

You take your walk some pretty cold and windy, but sunny March day, through rustling woods, perhaps, glad to take shelter in the hollows or on the south side of the hills or woods. When ensconced in some sunny and sheltered hollow, with some just melted pool at its bottom, as you recline on the fine withered sedge, in which the mice have had their galleries, leaving it pierced with countless holes, and are, perchance, dreaming of spring there, a single dry, hard croak, like a grating twig, comes up from the pool. Such is the earliest voice of the pools, where there is a small smooth surface of melted ice bathing the bare button-bushes or water andromeda or tufts of sedge; such is the earliest voice of the liquid pools, hard and dry and grating. Unless you watch long and closely, not a ripple nor a bubble will be seen, and a marsh hawk will have to look sharp to find one. The notes of the croaking frog and the hylodes are not only contemporary with, but analogous to, the blossoms of the skunk-cabbage and white maple.

Are not March and November *gray* months?

Men will hardly believe me when I tell them of the thickness of snow and ice at this time last year.

March 27. There is no snow now visible from my window except on the heel of a bank in the swallow-hole behind Dennis's. A sunny day, but rather cold air.

8.30 A. M. — Up Assabet in boat.

At last I push myself gently through the smooth and sunny water, sheltered by the Island woods and hill, where I listen for birds, etc. There I may expect to hear a woodpecker tapping the rotten aspen tree. There I pause to hear the faint voice of some early bird amid the twigs of the still wood-side. You are pretty sure to hear a woodpecker early in the morning over these still waters. But now chiefly there comes borne on the breeze the tinkle of the song sparrow along the river-side, and I push out into wind and current. Leave the boat and run down to the white maples by the bridge. The white maple is well out with its pale [?] stamens on the southward boughs, and probably began about the 24th. That would be about fifteen days earlier than last year.

I find a very regular elliptical rolled stone in the freshly (last fall) plowed low ground there, evidently brought from some pond or seaside. It is about seven inches long. The Indians prized such a stone, and I have found many of them where they haunted. Commonly one or both ends will be worn, showing that they have used it as a pestle or hammer.

As I go up the Assabet, I see two *Emys insculpta* on the bank in the sun, and one *picta*. They are all rather sluggish, and I can paddle up and take them up.

Found on the edge of Dodge's Brook, about midway, in the cedar field, what I did not hesitate to regard as an *Emys insculpta*, but thickly spotted with rusty-yellowish spots on the scales above, and the back was singularly

depressed. Was it a variety? It looked like a very old turtle, though not unusually large; the shell worn pretty smooth beneath. I could count more than thirty striæ above. When it dropped into the brook, I saw that the rusty-yellow spots served admirably to conceal it, for while the shell was bronze-colored (for a groundwork), the rusty-yellow spots were the color of the sandy and pebbly bottom of the brook. It was very differently shaped from the shell I have, and Storer does not mention yellow spots. Heard a lark in that meadow. Twitters over it on quivering wing and awakes the slumbering life of the meadow. The turtle and frog peep stealthily out and see the first lark go over.

Farmer was plowing a level pasture, unplowed for fourteen years, but in some places the frost was not quite out. Farmer says that he heard geese go over two or three nights ago.

I would fain make two reports in my Journal, first the incidents and observations of to-day; and by to-morrow I review the same and record what was omitted before, which will often be the most significant and poetic part. I do not know at first what it is that charms me. The men and things of to-day are wont to lie fairer and truer in to-morrow's memory.

I saw quail-tracks some two months ago, much like smaller partridge-tracks.

Farmer describes a singular track in the snow the past winter from near his house to Annursnack. Traced it in all five or six miles to a hemlock on the west side, and there he lost it. It travelled like a mink; made a track with all its four feet together, about as big as that

of a horse's foot, eighteen inches apart more or less. Wondered if it was a pine marten.

Men talk to me about society as if I had none and they had some, as if it were only to be got by going to the sociable or to Boston.

Compliments and flattery oftenest excite my contempt by the pretension they imply, for who is he that assumes to flatter me? To compliment often implies an assumption of superiority in the complimenter. It is, in fact, a subtle detraction.

Pickerel begin to dart in shallows.

March 28. 8.30 A. M. — Up river to Fair Haven by boat.

A pleasant morning; the song of the earliest birds, *i. e.* tree sparrows, (now decidedly) and song sparrows and bluebirds, in the air. A red-wing's gurgle from a willow.

The *Emys picta*, now pretty numerous, when young and fresh, with smooth black scales without moss or other imperfection, unworn, and with claws perfectly sharp, is very handsome. When the scales are of this clear, though dull, black, the six middle ones, counting from side to side, are edged forward with broad dull greenish-yellow borders, the others with a narrow whitish border, and the singular vermilion and yellow marks of the marginal scales extend often on to the lateral scales. The concentric lines of growth are indistinguishable. The fore and hind legs and tail are slashed or streaked horizontally with broad clear vermilion and also a fine yellow line or two, answering to

those on the hinge scales continued, showing the tenant to be one with the house he occupies. He who painted the tortoise thus, what were his designs? Beneath it is a clear buff.

At Lee's Cliff and this side, I see half a dozen buff-edged butterflies (*Vanessa Antiopa*) and pick up three dead or dying, two together, the edges of their wings gone. Several are fluttering over the dry rock débris under the cliff, in whose crevices probably they have wintered. Two of the three I pick up are not dead, though they will not fly. Verily their day is a short one. What has checked their frail life? Within, the buff edge is black with bright sky-blue spots, and the main part within is a purplish brown. Those little oblong spots on the black ground are light as you look directly down on them, but from one side they vary through violet to a crystalline rose-purple.

I can remember now some thirty years — after a fashion — of life in Concord, and every spring there are many dead suckers floating belly upward on the meadows. This phenomenon of dead suckers is as constant as the phenomenon of living ones; nay, as a phenomenon it is far more apparent.

Farmer thinks pickerel may have been frozen through half a day and yet come to. Instances pickerel he caught a very cold day on Bateman's Pond, which he brought home frozen and put in a pail of water in his cellar and after found them alive. A Mr. Parkhurst of Carlisle assures him that though minnows put into a half-hogshead of water will die in forty-eight hours unless you change the water, if you put with it a piece

of granite a foot square they will live all winter, and that he keeps his minnows in this way.

A pleasing sight this of the earlier painted tortoises which are seen along the edge of the flooded meadows, often three or four suddenly dimpling the smooth surface of a ditch, which had been sunning on a tussock, sluggish moving flakes of clear black. Soon they rise again and put their heads out warily, looking about and showing the yellow stripes on their necks. They seem to feel the very jar of the ground as you approach. They rest with their shells at an angle in the water, their heads out and their feet outstretched, or partly bury themselves in the grassy bottom. Often hindered by the bushes, between which their shells are caught. Poking their heads through, they are impeded by their shells. The very earliest I see moving along the bottom on the meadows, but soon after they begin to lie out in the sun on the banks and tussocks as I have mentioned.

The *Emys guttata* is found in brooks and ditches. I passed three to-day, lying cunningly quite motionless, with heads and feet drawn in, on the bank of a little grassy ditch, close to a stump, in the sun, on the russet flattened grass, like snails, or rather scales, under which some insects might lurk, with their high-arched backs. When out of water they are the less exposed to observation by their shells drying and their spots being dimmed.

Do I ever see a yellow-spot turtle in the river? Do I ever see a wood tortoise in the South Branch?

There is consolation in the fact that a particular evil, which perhaps we suffer, is of a venerable antiquity, for

it proves its necessity and that it is part of the *order*, not disorder, of the universe. When I realize that the mortality of suckers in the spring is as old a phenomenon, perchance, as the race of suckers itself, I contemplate it with serenity and joy even, as one of the signs of spring. Thus they have fallen on fate. And so, many a fisherman is not seen on the shore who the last spring did not fail here.

Flood tells me to-day that he finds no frost to trouble him in Monroe's garden. He can put his spade or fork in anywhere.

Chestnut, evidently because it is packed as in a little *chest*.

The maple sap has been flowing well for two or three weeks.

When I witness the first plowing and planting, I acquire a long-lost confidence in the earth, — that it will nourish the seed that is committed to its bosom. I am surprised to be reminded that there is warmth in it. We have not only warmer skies, then, but a warmer earth. The frost is out of it, and we may safely commit these seeds to it in some places. Yesterday I walked with Farmer beside his team and saw one furrow turned quite round his field. What noble work is plowing, with the broad and solid earth for material, the ox for fellow-laborer, and the simple but efficient plow for tool! Work that is not done in any shop, in a cramped position, work that tells, that concerns all men, which the sun shines and the rain falls on, and the birds sing over! You turn over the whole vegetable mould, expose how many grubs, and put a new aspect on the face of the

earth. It comes pretty near to making a world. Redeeming a swamp does, at any rate. A good plowman is a *terrae filius*. The plowman, we all know, whistles as he drives his team afield.

The broad buff edge of the *Vanessa Antiopa's* wings harmonizes with the russet ground it flutters over, and as it stands concealed in the winter, with its wings folded above its back, in a cleft in the rocks, the gray-brown under side of its wings prevents its being distinguished from the rocks themselves.

Often I can give the truest and most interesting account of any adventure I have had after years have elapsed, for then I am not confused, only the most significant facts surviving in my memory. Indeed, all that continues to interest me after such a lapse of time is sure to be pertinent, and I may safely record all that I remember.

Farmer tells me that his bees are killing one another nowadays,[1] *i. e.* as he supposes: and he is probably right; the workers are killing the drones.

March 29. P. M. — To Walden and river.

Walden open, say to-day, though there is still a little ice in the deep southern bay and a very narrow edging along the southern shore.

Cross through the woods to my boat under Fair Haven Hill. How empty and silent the woods now, before leaves have put forth or thrushes and warblers are come! Deserted halls, floored with dry leaves, where scarcely an insect stirs as yet.

[1] Probably a mistake.

Taking an average of eight winters, it appears that Walden is frozen about ninety-eight days in the year.

When I have put my boat in its harbor, I hear that sign-squeaking blackbird, and, looking up, see half a dozen on the top of the elm at the foot of Whiting's lot. They are not red-wings, and by their size they make me think of crow blackbirds, yet on the whole I think them grackles (?).[1] *Possibly* those I heard on the 18th were the same?? Does the red-wing ever make a noise like a rusty sign?

March 31. A very pleasant day. Spent a part of it in the garden preparing to set out fruit trees. It is agreeable once more to put a spade into the warm mould. The victory is ours at last, for we remain and take possession of the field. In this climate, in which we do not commonly bury our dead in the winter on account of the frozen ground, and find ourselves exposed on a hard bleak crust, the coming out of the frost and the first turning up of the soil with a spade or plow is an event of importance.

P. M. — To Hill.

As I rise the east side of the Hill, I hear the distant faint peep of hylodes and the *tut tut* of croaking frogs from the west of the Hill. How gradually and imperceptibly the peep of the hylodes mingles with and swells the volume of sound which makes the voice of awakening nature! If you do not listen carefully for its first note, you probably will not hear it, and, not having heard that, your ears become used to the sound,

[1] *Vide* Apr. 1st.

so that you will hardly notice it at last, however loud and universal. I hear it now faintly from through and over the bare gray twigs and the sheeny needles of an oak and pine wood and from over the russet fields beyond, and it is so intimately mingled with the murmur or roar of the wind as to be well-nigh inseparable from it. It leaves such a lasting trace on the ear's memory that often I think I hear their peeping when I do not. It is a singularly emphatic and ear-piercing proclamation of animal life, when with a very few and slight exceptions vegetation is yet dormant. The dry croaking and *tut tut* of the frogs (a sound which ducks seem to imitate, a kind of *quacking*, — and they are both of the water!) is plainly enough down there in some pool in the woods, but the shrill peeping of the hylodes locates itself nowhere in particular, but seems to take its rise at an indefinite distance over wood and hill and pasture, from clefts or hollows in the March wind. It is a wind-born sound.[1]

To-day both croakers and peepers are pretty numerously heard, and I hear one *faint stertorous* (bullfrog-like??) sound on the river meadow.

What an important part to us the little peeping hylodes acts, filling all our ears with sound in the spring afternoons and evenings, while the existence of the otter, our largest wild animal, is not betrayed to any of our senses (or at least not to more than one in a thousand)!

The voice of the peepers is not so much of the earth earthy as of the air airy. It rises at once on the wind

[1] This must be the *Rana halecina*. *Vide* Apr. 3d, 1858.

and is at home there, and we are incapable of tracing it further back.

The earliest gooseberry in the garden begins to show a little green near at hand.

An Irishman is digging a ditch for a foundation wall to a new shop where James Adams's shop stood. He tells me that he dug up three cannon-balls just in the rear of the shop lying within a foot of each other and about eighteen inches beneath the surface. I saw one of them, which was about three and a half inches in diameter and somewhat eaten with rust on one side. These were probably thrown into the pond by the British on the 19th of April, 1775. Shattuck says that five hundred pounds of balls were thrown into the pond and wells. These may have been dropped out the back window.

The tortoises now quite commonly lie out sunning on the sedge or the bank. As you float gently down the stream, you hear a slight rustling and, looking up, see the dark shining back of a *picta* sliding off some little bed of straw-colored coarse sedge which is upheld by the button-bushes or willows above the surrounding water. They are very wary and, as I go up the Assabet, will come rolling and sliding down a rod or two, though they appear to have but just climbed up to that height.

IX

APRIL, 1857

(ÆT. 39)

April 1. 8 A. M. — Up Assabet.

See an *Emys guttata* sunning on the bank. I had forgotten whether I ever saw it in this river. Hear a phœbe, and this morning the tree sparrows sing very sweetly about Keyes's arbor-vitæ and Cheney's pines and apple trees. Crow blackbirds. I think it must have been these I saw the 29th of March. Checkerberries very fair and abundant now near Muhlenbergii Brook, contrasting with the red-brown leaves. They are not commonly touched by the frost. I see children picking spring cranberries in the meadows. It is a true April evening, feeling and looking as if it would [rain], and already I hear a robin or two singing their evening song.

April 2. Go to New Bedford.

A great change in the weather. I set out apple trees yesterday, but in the night it was very cold, with snow, which is now several inches deep. On the sidewalk in Cambridge I see a toad, which apparently hopped out from under a fence last evening, frozen quite hard in a sitting posture. Carried it into Boston in my pocket, but could not thaw it into life.

The other day as I came to the front of the house I

caught sight of a genuine wayfaring man, an oldish countryman, with a frock and a bundle strapped to his back, who was speaking to the butcher, just then driving off in his cart. He was a gaunt man with a flashing eye, as if half crazy with travel, and was complaining, "You see it shakes me so, I would rather travel the common road." I supposed that he referred to the railroad, which the butcher had recommended for shortness. I was touched with compassion on observing the butcher's apparent indifference, as, jumping to his seat, he drove away before the traveller had finished his sentence, and the latter fell at once into the regular wayfarer's gait, bending under his pack and holding the middle of the road with a teetering gait.

On my way to New Bedford, see within a couple of rods of the railroad, in some country town, a boy's box trap set for some muskrat or mink by the side of a little pond. The lid was raised, and I could see the bait on its point.

A black snake was seen yesterday in the Quaker burying-ground here.

April 3. In Ricketson's shanty. R. has seen white-bellied swallows more than a week. I walk down the side of the river and see Walton's ice-boat left on the bank.

Hear R. describing to Alcott his bachelor uncle James Thornton. When he awakes in the morning he lights the fire in his stove (all prepared) with a match on the end of a stick, without getting up. When he gets up he first attends to his ablutions, being personally

very clean, cuts off a head of tobacco to clean his teeth with, eats a hearty breakfast, sometimes, it was said, even buttering his sausages. Then he goes to a relative's store and reads the *Tribune* till dinner, sitting in a corner with his back to those who enter. Goes to his boarding-house and dines, eats an apple or two, and then in the afternoon frequently goes about the solution of some mathematical problem (having once been a schoolmaster), which often employs him a week.[1]

April 4. *Saturday.* Walk down the shore of the river. A Dutchman pushes out in his skiff after quahogs. He also took his eel-spear, thinking to try for eels if he could not get quahogs, for, owing to the late cold weather, they might still be buried in the mud. I saw him raking up the quahogs on the flats at high (?) tide, in two or three feet of water. He used a sort of coarse, long-pronged hoe. Keeps anchoring on the flats and searches for a clam on the bottom with his eye, then rakes it up and picks it off his rake.

Am not sure what kind of large gulls I see there, some more white, some darker, methinks, than the herring gull.

R. tells me that he found dead in his piazza the south side of his house, the 23d of last January, the snow being very deep and the thermometer $-12°$ at sunrise, a warbler, which he sent to Brewer. I read Brewer's note to him, in which he said that he took it to be the *Sylvicola coronata* and would give it to the Natural

[1] [*Daniel Ricketson and his Friends*, p. 350.]

History Society, thinking it remarkable that it was found at that time. B. says that he discovered "for the first time its nest in the heart of Nova Scotia near Parrsboro mountains [I think last season].[1] It was the only *new* egg of that trip. Yet I felt well repaid, for 'no other white man had ever before seen that egg to know it,' as Audubon says of another species."

Caught a croaking frog in some smooth water in the railroad gutter. Above it was a uniform (perhaps olive?) brown, without green, and a yellowish line along the edge of the lower jaws. It was, methinks, larger than a common *Rana palustris*. Near by was its spawn, in very handsome spherical masses of transparent jelly, two and a half to three inches in diameter, suspended near the surface of some weed, as goldenrod or aster, and consisting of globules about a third of an inch in diameter, with a black or dark centre as big as a large shot. Only these black centres were visible at a little distance in the water, and so much the more surprising and interesting is the translucent jelly when you lift it to the light. It even suggested the addition of cream and sugar, for the table. Yet this pool must have been frozen over last night! What frog can it be?[2]

April 5. Sunday. Arthur R. has been decking a new Vineyard boat which he has bought, and making a curb about the open part.

P. M. — Walked round by the ruins of the factory. See in many places the withered leaves of the aletris in

[1] [The brackets are Thoreau's.]

[2] *Vide* Apr. 4th, 1857. *R. sylvatica.*

rather low ground, about the still standing withered stems. It was well called husk-root by the squaw.

Arthur says that he just counted, at 9.30 P. M., twenty toads that had hopped out from under the wall on to the sidewalk near the house. This, then, is apparently the way with the toads. They very early hop out from under walls on to sidewalks in the warmer nights, long before they are heard to ring, and are often frozen and then crushed there. Probably single ones ring earlier than I supposed. I hear the croaking frogs at 9.30 P. M., also the *speed speed* over R.'s meadow, which I once referred to the snipe, but R. says is the woodcock, whose other strain he has already heard.

April 6. P. M. — To New Bedford Library.

Mr. Ingraham, the librarian, says that he once saw frog-spawn in New Bedford the 4th of March. Take out Emmons's Report on the insects injurious to vegetation in New York. See a plate of the *Colias Philodice*, or common sulphur-yellow butterfly, male and female of different tinge. *Areoda lanigera* is apparently the common yellow dor-bug. Arthur has *Tabanus*, the great horse-fly. Emmons says of *Scutelleridæ:* "The disagreeable smelling bugs that frequent berry bushes and strawberry vines belong here. . . . Of this family the genus Pentatoma is one of the most common and feeds upon the juice of plants. Sometimes it has only to pass over a fruit, to impart to it its offensive odor." The one represented looks like the huckleberry one.

April 7. Tuesday. Went to walk in the woods. When I had got half a mile or more away in the woods alone, and was sitting on a rock, was surprised to be joined by R.'s large Newfoundland dog Ranger, who had smelled me out and so tracked me. Would that I could add his woodcraft to my own! He would trot along before me as far as the winding wood-path allowed me to see him, and then, with the shortest possible glance over his shoulder, ascertain if I was following. At a fork in the road he would pause, look back at me, and deliberate which course I would take.

At sundown I went out to gather bayberries to make tallow of. Holding a basket beneath, I rubbed them off into it between my hands, and so got about a quart, to which were added enough to make about three pints. They are interesting little gray berries clustered close about the short bare twigs, just below the last year's growth. The berries have little prominences, like those of an orange, encased with tallow, the tallow also filling the interstices, down to the nut.

They require a great deal of boiling to get out all the tallow. The outmost case soon melted off, but the inmost part I did not get even after many hours of boiling. The oily part rose to the top, making it look like a savory black broth, which smelled just like balm or other herb tea. I got about a quarter of a pound by weight from these say three pints of berries, and more yet remained. Boil a great while, let it cool, then skim off the tallow from the surface; melt again and strain it. What I got was more yellow than what I have seen in the shops. A small portion cooled in the form

of small corns (nuggets I called them when I picked them out from amid the berries), flat hemispherical, of a very pure lemon yellow, and these needed no straining. The berries were left black and massed together by the remaining tallow.[1]

Cat-briar (*Smilax*) they call here "the devil's wrapping yarn." I see several emperor moth cocoons, with small eggs on the back, apparently of the ichneumon-fly, that has destroyed the nymph.

April 8. I discovered one convenient use the bayberries served, — that if you got your hands pitched in pine woods, you had only to rub a parcel of these berries between your hands to start the pitch off. Arthur said the shoemakers at the Head of the River used the tallow to rub the soles of their shoes with to make them shine. I gathered a quart in about twenty minutes with my hands. You might gather them much faster with a suitable rake and a large shallow basket, or if one were clearing a field he could cut the bushes and thresh them in a heap.

April 9. *Thursday.* A. M. — To the cove south of the town.

See them haul two seines. They caught chiefly alewives, from sixty to a hundred at a haul, seine twelve to fifteen feet wide. There were also caught with the alewives, skates, two or three "drums" (like flatfish, only the mouth twisted the other way and not good), flatfish, smelts, sculpins, five-fingers, and a lobster with

[1] [*Cape Cod*, p. 103; Riv. 121, 122.]

red claws. This was what the seine would catch in making a large circuit. It seemed to be pretty hard work hauling it in, employing two or three men or boys at each end. A fisherman said that they caught the first alewife the 28th of March there.

Picked up many handsome scallop shells beyond the ice-houses, with wormy-shaped parasites on them.

April 10. *Friday.* Rain.

D. R.'s shanty is about half a dozen rods southwest of his house (which may be forty rods from the road), nearly between his house and barn; is twelve by fourteen feet, with seven-feet posts, with common pent-roof. In building it, he directed the carpenter to use Western boards and timber, though some Eastern studs (spruce?) were inserted. He had already occupied a smaller shanty at "Woodlee" about a mile south. The roof is shingled and the sides made of matched boards and painted a light clay-color with chocolate(?)-colored blinds. Within, it is not plastered and is open to the roof, showing the timbers and rafters and rough boards and cross-timbers overhead as if ready for plastering. The door is at the east end with a small window on each side of it; a similar window on each side the building, and one at the west end, the latter looking down the garden walk. In front of the last window is a small box stove with a funnel rising to a level with the plate, and there inserted in a small brick chimney which rests on planks. On the south side the room, against the stove, is a rude settle with a coarse cushion and pillow; on the opposite side, a large low

desk, with some book-shelves above it; on the same side, by the window, a small table covered with books; and in the northeast corner, behind the door, an old-fashioned secretary, its pigeonholes stuffed with papers. On the opposite side as you enter, is place for fuel, which the boy leaves each morning, a place to hang greatcoats. There were two small pieces of carpet on the floor, and Ricketson or one of his guests swept out the shanty each morning. There was a small kitchen clock hanging in the southwest corner and a map of Bristol County behind the settle.

The west and northwest side is well-nigh covered with slips of paper, on which are written some sentence or paragraph from R.'s favorite books. I noticed, among the most characteristic, Dibdin's "Tom Tackle," a translation of Anacreon's "Cicada," lines celebrating tobacco, Milton's "How charming is divine philosophy," etc., "Inveni requiem: Spes et Fortuna valete. Nil mihi vobiscum est: ludite nunc alios" (is it Petrarch?) (this is also over the door), "Mors aequo pulsat," etc., some lines of his own in memory of A. J. Downing, "Not to be in a hurry," over the desk, and many other quotations celebrating retirement, country life, simplicity, humanity, sincerity, etc., etc., from Cowper and other English poets, and similar extracts from newspapers. There were also two or three advertisements, — one of a cattle-show exhibition, another warning not to kill birds contrary to law (he being one of the subscribers ready to enforce the act), advertisement of a steamboat on Lake Winnepiseogee, etc., cards of his business friends. The size of different

brains from *Hall's Journal of Health*, and "Take the world easy." A sheet of blotted blotting-paper tacked up, and of Chinese character from a tea-chest. Also a few small pictures and pencil sketches, the latter commonly caricatures of his visitors or friends, as "The Trojan" (Channing) and "Van Best." I take the more notice of these particulars because his peculiarities are so commonly unaffected. He has long been accustomed to put these scraps on his walls and has a basketful somewhere, saved from the old shanty. Though there were some quotations which had no right there, I found all his peculiarities faithfully expressed, — his humanity, his fear of death, love of retirement, simplicity, etc.

The more characteristic books were Bordley's "Husbandry," Drake's "Indians," Barber's "Historical Collections," Zimmermann on Solitude, Bigelow's "Plants of Boston, etc.," Farmer's "Register of the First Settlers of New England," Marshall's "Gardening," Nicol's "Gardener," John Woolman, "The Modern Horse Doctor," Downing's "Fruits, etc.," "The Farmer's Library," "Walden," Dymond's Essays, Job Scott's Journal, Morton's Memorial, Bailey's Dictionary, Downing's "Landscape Gardening, etc.," "The Task," Nuttall's Ornithology, Morse's Gazetteer, "The Domestic Practice of Hydropathy," "John Buncle," Dwight's Travels, Virgil, Young's "Night Thoughts," "History of Plymouth," and other "*Shanty Books*."

There was an old gun, hardly safe to fire, said to be loaded with an inextractable charge, and also an old sword over the door, also a tin sign "D. Ricketson's

Office" (he having set up for a lawyer once) and a small crumpled horn there. I counted more than twenty rustic canes scattered about, a dozen or fifteen pipes of various patterns, mostly the common, two spy-glasses, an open paper of tobacco, an Indian's jaw dug up, a stuffed blue jay and pine grosbeak, and a rude Indian stone hatchet, etc., etc. There was a box with fifteen or twenty knives, mostly very large and old-fashioned jack-knives, kept for curiosity, occasionally given away to a boy or friend. A large book full of pencil sketches to be inspected by whomsoever, containing countless sketches of his friends and acquaintances and himself and of wayfaring men whom he had met, Quakers, etc., etc., and now and then a vessel under full sail or an old-fashioned house, sketched on a peculiar pea-green paper. A pail of water stands behind the door, with a peculiar tin cup for drinking made in France.[1]

April 11. *Saturday.* 8 P. M. — Went to the Head of the River to see them catch smelts. The water there is fresh when the tide is out. They use nets five or six feet square, stretched from the ends of crossed semi-circular hoops, at the ends of poles about twelve feet long. The net bags down when raised. There were twenty or thirty fishermen standing close together, half on each side of the narrow river, each managing one of these nets, while a good part of the village appeared to be collected on the bridge. The tide was then coming in, but the best time is when it is going out. A fisher-

[1] [*Daniel Ricketson and his Friends*, pp. 350–354.]

man told me that the smelt run up in the night only. These fishers stood just below a two-arched bridge. The tide was coming up between the arches, while the fresh water which the smelt preferred was running down next the shore on each side. The smelt were ascending in these streams of fresh water on each side. The shore for half a dozen rods on each side was lined with fishers, each wielding a single net. This man told me that the smelt had been running up about one month and were now about done. The herring had been seen for a fortnight. They will run this month and all the next. The former leave off when the latter begin. Shad have not been caught yet. They come after herring. Eels, too, are occasionally caught now, going up from the deeper river below. These fishes spawn in the little pond just above the bridge. They let the net rest on the bottom and every two or three minutes lift it up. They get thirty or many more smelt sometimes at one lift and catch other fish in the same way, even bass, sea perch, pickerel, eels, and sometimes a trout. The shad make a ripple like a harrow, and you know when to raise the net. The villagers were talking across the stream, calling each other by their Christian names. Even mothers mingled with the fishermen, looking for their children. It suggested how much we had lost out of Concord River without realizing it. This is the critical season of a river, when it is fullest of life, its flowering season, the wavelets or ripples on its surface answering to the scales of the fishes beneath.

I saw the herring on sticks at the doors of many shops in New Bedford.

I saw the myrtle-bird here about a week ago.

If salmon, shad, and alewives were pressing up our river now, as formerly they were, a good part of the villagers would thus, no doubt, be drawn to the brink at this season. Many inhabitants of the neighborhood of the ponds in Lakeville, Freetown, Fairhaven, etc., have petitioned the legislature for permission to connect Little Quitticus Pond with the Acushnet River by digging, so that the herring can come up into it. The very fishes in countless schools are driven out of a river by the *improvements* of the civilized man, as the pigeon and other fowls out of the air. I can hardly imagine a greater change than this produced by the influence of man in nature. Our Concord River is a dead stream in more senses than we had supposed. In what sense now does the spring ever come to the river, when the sun is not reflected from the scales of a single salmon, shad, or alewife? No doubt there is *some* compensation for this loss, but I do not at this moment see clearly what it is. That river which the aboriginal and indigenous fishes have not deserted is a more primitive and interesting river to me. It is as if some vital quality were to be lost out of a man's blood and it were to circulate more lifelessly through his veins. We are reduced to a few migrating (?) suckers, perchance.

April 12. *Sunday.* I think I hear the bay-wing here.

April 13. *Monday.* To Middleborough ponds.

There was no boat on Little Quitticus; so we could

not explore it. Set out to walk round it, but, the water being high, — higher than anciently even, on account of dams, — we had to go round a swamp at the south end, about Joe's Rocks, and R. gave it up. I went to Long Pond and waited for him. Saw a strange turtle, much like a small snapping turtle or very large *Sternothærus odoratus*, crawling slowly along the bottom next the shore. Poked it ashore with a stick. It had a peculiarly square snout, two hinges to the sternum and both parts movable. Was very sluggish; would not snap nor bite. Looked old, being mossy above on the edge, and the scales greenish and eaten beneath. The flesh slate-colored.[1]

[1] [The following (written on the back of a lottery circular!) is pasted into the Journal:]

The Freetown Turtle compared with Storer's *Sternothærus*.

Answers to the generic description, except perhaps that the posterior valve of the sternum is movable.

Compared with the *S. odoratus*.

There is no peculiar scent to it. The upper shell is flattened on the dorsal ridge for the width of the dorsal plates and is not carinated there. (I find one as flat, and others are not carinated.) Color out of water a dirty brown. The marginal plates are a little narrower.

The sternum (as well as that of my *S. odoratus*) is apparently composed of 11 instead of 9 plates, the anterior portion being composed of 5 instead of 3 plates. The posterior portion is distinctly movable, much more than the *odoratus*, and it is quite rounded on the sides.

Irides not distinct. It appears as if blind. No yellow lines whatever on the head or neck. Jaws not dark-brown, but bluish-slate, as is the skin generally.

My two *S. odoratus* are 3⅝ inches long by 2½ wide and 1½ inches high, being highest behind. The Freetown turtle is 4 inches long by 2¾ and 1⅝ high, being highest forward. It has much green moss (?) on the rear and marginal plates, and the scales of the sternum are

I saw that it was new and wished to bring it away, but had no paper to wrap it in. So I peeled a white birch, getting a piece of bark about ten inches long. I noticed that the birch sap was flowing. This bark at once curled back so as to present its yellow side outward. I rolled it about the turtle and folded the ends back and tied it round with a strip of birch bark, making a very nice and airy box for the creature, which would not be injured by moisture, far better than any paper, and so I brought it home to Concord at last. As my coat hung in R.'s shanty, over a barrel of paper, the morning that I came away the turtle made a little noise, scratching the birch bark in my pocket. R. observed, "There is a mouse in that barrel. What would you do about it?" "Oh, let him alone," said I, "he 'll get out directly." "They often get among my papers," he added. "I guess I 'd better set the barrel outdoors." I did not explain, and perhaps he experimented on the barrel after my departure.[1]

As I sat on the shore there, waiting for R., I saw many mosquitoes flying low over the water close to the sandy shore.

greenish and worn or carious. It is quite sluggish. Otherwise it apparently answers to Storer's *S. odoratus*.

Get a sternothærus May 13th within ¼ inch as long and about as flat above. *Vide* July 20th, 1857.

[1] [*Daniel Ricketson and his Friends*, pp. 354, 355. The editors insert the following note: —

"This might appear like a practical joke, but we are inclined to think it was out of consideration for Father's sensitiveness regarding all dumb animals that Mr. Thoreau kept him 'in the dark' as to his specimen, fearing he might be disturbed."]

The turtle when I first saw him was slowly and tremblingly pacing along the bottom, rather toward the shore, with its large head far out on its outstretched neck. From its *size* and general color and aspect, I did not doubt at first that it was a snapping turtle, notwithstanding the season.

April 14. *Tuesday.* Rains all day.

April 15. *Wednesday.* Leave New Bedford.

I had been surprised to find the season more backward, *i. e.* the vegetation, in New Bedford than in Concord. I could find no alder and willow and hazel catkins and no caltha and saxifrage so forward as in Concord. The ground was a uniform russet when I left, but when I had come twenty miles it was visibly greener, and the greenness steadily increased all the way to Boston. Coming to Boston, and also to Concord, was like coming from early spring to early summer. It was as if a fortnight at least had elapsed. Yet New Bedford is much warmer in the winter. Why is it more backward than Concord? The country is very flat and exposed to southerly winds from the sea, which, to my surprise, were raw and chilly. Also the soil is wet and cold, unlike our warm sandy soil, which is dry the day after a rainstorm. Perhaps, as the ground is more bare in the winter, vegetation suffers more after all. One told me that there was more cloudy weather than here. It seemed to me that there was a deficiency of warm hollows and sheltered places behind hills and woods, which abound with us. On such cliffs as they have facing the south, vege-

tation was much more backward than in like positions with us, apparently owing to sea-turns and chilly south winds.

April 16. At Concord.

Get birch sap, — two bottles yellow birch and five of black birch, — now running freely, though not before I left Concord. Meanwhile I hear the note of the pine warbler. Last night was very cold, and some ditches are frozen this morning. This is Fast-Day. I think if you should tap all the trees in a large birch swamp, you would make a stream large enough to turn a mill.

About a month ago, at the post-office, Abel Brooks, who is pretty deaf, sidling up to me, observed in a loud voice which all could hear, "Let me see, your society is pretty large, ain't it?" "Oh, yes, large enough," said I, not knowing what he meant. "There 's Stewart belongs to it, and Collier, he 's one of them, and Emerson, and my boarder" (Pulsifer), "and Channing, I believe, I think he goes there." "You mean the *walkers;* don't you?" "Ye-es, I call you the Society. All go to the woods; don't you?" "Do you miss any of your wood?" I asked. "No, I hain't worried any yet. I believe you 're a pretty clever set, as good as the average," etc., etc.

Telling Sanborn of this, he said that, when he first came to town and boarded at Holbrook's, he asked H. how many religious societies there were in town. H. said that there were three, — the Unitarian, the Orthodox, and the Walden Pond Society. I asked Sanborn

with which Holbrook classed himself. He said he believes that he put himself with the last.

April 17. Rain. It rains about every other day now for a fortnight past.

April 18. P. M. — To Conantum.

Hear the huckleberry-bird, also the seringo. The beaked hazel, if that is one just below the little pine at Blackberry Steep, is considerably later than the common, for I cannot get a whole twig fully out, though the common is too far gone to gather there. The catkins, too, are shorter.

April 20. Arbor-vitæ apparently in full bloom.

April 21. *Tuesday.* Mr. Loomis writes me that he saw two barn swallows in Cambridge April 1st! I have the *Corema Conradii* from Plymouth, in bloom.

It snows hard all day. If it did not melt so fast, would be a foot deep. As it is, is about three inches on a level.

April 22. *Wednesday.* Fair again.

To Great Sudbury Meadow by boat.

The river higher than before and rising. C. and I sail rapidly before a strong northerly wind, — no need of rowing upward, only of steering, — cutting off great bends by crossing the meadows. We have to roll our boat over the road at the stone bridge, Hubbard's causeway, (to save the wind), and at Pole Brook (to save

distance). It is worth the while to hear the surging of the waves and their gurgling under the stern, and to feel the great billows toss us, with their foaming yellowish crests. The world is not aware what an extensive navigation is now possible on our overflowed fresh meadows. It is more interesting and fuller of life than the sea bays and permanent ponds. A dozen gulls are circling over Fair Haven Pond, some very white beneath, with very long, narrow-pointed, black-tipped wings, almost regular semicircles like the new moon. As they circle beneath a white scud in this bright air, they are almost invisible against it, they are so nearly the same color. What glorious fliers! But few birds are seen; only a crow or two teetering along the water's edge looking for its food, with its large, clumsy head, and on unusually long legs, as if stretched, or its pants pulled up to keep it from the wet, and now flapping off with some large morsel in its bill; or robins in the same place; or perhaps the sweet song of the tree sparrows from the alders by the shore, or of a song sparrow or blackbird. The phœbe is scarcely heard. Not a duck do we see! All the shores have the aspect of winter, covered several inches deep with snow, and we see the shadows on the snow as in winter; but it is strange to see the green grass burning up through in warmer nooks under the walls.

We pause or lay to from time to time, in some warm, smooth lee, under the southwest side of a wood or hill, as at Hubbard's Second Grove and opposite Weir Hill, pushing through saturated snow like ice on the surface of the water. There we lie awhile amid the bare alders,

maples, and willows, in the sun, see the expanded sweet-gale and early willows and the budding swamp pyrus looking up drowned from beneath. As we lie in a broad field of meadow wrack, — floating cranberry leaves and finely bruised meadow-hay, — a wild medley. Countless spiders are hastening over the water. We pass a dozen boats sunk at their moorings, at least at one end, being moored too low.

Near Tall's Island, rescued a little pale or yellowish brown snake that was coiled round a willow half a dozen rods from the shore and was apparently chilled by the cold. Was it not Storer's "little brown snake?" It had a flat body. Frank Smith lives in a shanty on the hill near by.

At the Cliff Brook I see the skunk-cabbage leaves not yet unrolled, with their points gnawed off. Some very fresh brown fungi on an alder, tender and just formed one above another, flat side up, while those on the birch are white and flat side down. They soon dry white and hard. This melting snow makes a great crop of fungi.

Turritis stricta, nearly out (in two or three days).

Observed the peculiar dark lines on a birch (*Betula populifolia*) at the insertion of the branches, regular cones like volcanoes in outline, the part included grayish-brown and wrinkled, edged by broad heavy dark lines. There are as many of these very regular cones on the white ground of a large birch as there are branches. They are occasioned by the two currents of growth, that of the main trunk and that of the branch (which last commenced several inches lower near the centre of the tree),

meeting and being rucked or turned up at the line of contact like a surge, exposing the edges of the inner bark there, decayed and dark, while the bark within the lines approaches the darker color of the limb. The larger were six or seven inches high by as much in width at the bottom. You observe the same manner of growth in other trees. That portion of the bark below the limb obeys the influence of the limb and endeavors to circle about it, but soon encounters the growth of the main stem. There are interesting figures on the stem of a large white birch, arranged spirally about it.

The river has risen several inches since morning, so that we push over Hubbard Bridge causeway, where we stuck in the morning.

April 23. I saw at Ricketson's a young woman, Miss Kate Brady, twenty years old, her father an Irishman, a worthless fellow, her mother a smart Yankee. The daughter formerly did sewing, but now keeps school for a livelihood. She was born at the Brady house, I think in Freetown, where she lived till twelve years old and helped her father in the field. There she rode horse to plow and was knocked off the horse by apple tree boughs, kept sheep, caught fish, etc., etc. I never heard a girl or woman express so strong a love for nature. She purposes to return to that lonely ruin, and dwell there alone, since her mother and sister will not accompany her; says that she knows all about farming and keeping sheep and spinning and weaving, though it would puzzle her to shingle the old house. There she thinks she can "live free." I was pleased to hear

of her plans, because they were quite cheerful and original, not professedly reformatory, but growing out of her love for "Squire's Brook and the Middleborough ponds." A strong love for outward nature is singularly rare among both men and women. The scenery immediately about her homestead is quite ordinary, yet she appreciates and can use that part of the universe as no other being can. Her own sex, so tamely bred, only jeer at her for entertaining such an idea, but she has a strong head and a love for good reading, which may carry her through. I would by no means discourage, nor yet particularly encourage her, for I would have her so strong as to succeed in spite of all ordinary discouragements.

It is very rare that I hear one express a strong and imperishable attachment to a particular scenery, or to the whole of nature, — I mean such as will control their whole lives and characters. Such seem to have a true home in nature, a hearth in the fields and woods, whatever tenement may be burned. The soil and climate is warm to them. They alone are naturalized, but most are tender and callow creatures that wear a house as their outmost shell and must get their lives insured when they step abroad from it. They are lathed and plastered in from all natural influences, and their delicate lives are a long battle with the dyspepsia. The others are fairly rooted in the soil, and are the noblest plant it bears, more hardy and natural than sorrel. The dead earth seems animated at the prospect of their coming, as if proud to be trodden on by them. It recognizes its lord. Children of the Golden Age. Hospitals and almshouses are not their destiny. When I

hear of such an attachment in a reasonable, a divine, creature to a particular portion of the earth, it seems as if then first the earth succeeded and rejoiced, as if it had been made and existed only for such a use. These various soils and reaches which the farmer plods over, which the traveller glances at and the geologist dryly describes, then first flower and bear their fruit. Does he chiefly own the land who coldly uses it and gets corn and potatoes out of it, or he who loves it and gets inspiration from it? How rarely a man's love for nature becomes a ruling principle with him, like a youth's affection for a maiden, but more enduring! All nature is my bride. That nature which to one is a stark and ghastly solitude is a sweet, tender, and genial society to another.

They told me at New Bedford that one of their whalers came in the other day with a black man aboard whom they had picked up swimming in the broad Atlantic, without anything to support him, but nobody could understand his language or tell where he came from. He was in good condition and well-behaved. My respect for my race rose several degrees when I heard this, and I thought they had found the true merman at last. "What became of him?" I inquired. "I believe they sent him to the State Almshouse," was the reply. Could anything have been more ridiculous? That he should be beholden to Massachusetts for his support who floated free where Massachusetts with her State Almshouse could not have supported herself for a moment. They should have dined him, then accompanied him to the nearest cape and bidden him good-by.

The State would do well to appoint an intelligent standing committee on such curious [*sic*], in behalf of philologists, naturalists, and so forth, to see that the proper disposition is made of such visitors.

April 24. Sail to Ball's Hill.

The water is at its height, higher than before this year. I see a few shad-flies on its surface. Scudding over the Great Meadows, I see the now red crescents of the red maples in their prime round about, above the gray stems. The willow osiers require to be seen endwise the rows, to get an intense color. The clouds are handsome this afternoon: on the north, some dark, windy clouds, with rain falling thus beneath: —

but it is chiefly wind; southward, those summer clouds in numerous isles, light above and dark-barred beneath. Now the sun comes out and shines on the pine hill west of Ball's Hill, lighting up the light-green pitch pines and the sand and russet-brown lichen-clad hill. That is a very New England landscape. Buttrick's yellow farmhouse near by is in harmony with it. The little fuzzy gnats are about. I see a vertical circular cobweb, more than a foot in diameter, nearly filled with them, and this revealed the existence of the swarms that had filled the air on all sides. If it had been as

many yards wide as it was inches, it would probably have been just as full.

Saw on a small oak slanting over water in a swamp, in the midst of a mass of cat-briar, about ten feet from the ground, a very large nest, of that hypnum (?) moss, in the form of an inverted cone, one foot across above and about eight inches deep, with a hole in the side very thick and warm; probably a mouse-nest, for there were mouse droppings within.

April 25. Saturday. P. M. — Down Turnpike to Smith's Hill and return by Goose Pond.

Saw a large old hollow log with the upper side [gone], which [made] me doubt if it was not a trough open at the ends, and suggested that the first trough was perhaps such a hollow log with one side split off and the ends closed.

It is cool and windy this afternoon. Some sleet falls, but as we sit on the east side of Smith's chestnut grove, the wood, though so open and leafless, makes a perfect lee for us, apparently by breaking the force of the wind. A dense but bare grove of slender chestnut trunks a dozen rods wide is a perfect protection against this violent wind, and makes a perfectly calm lee.

I find that I can very easily make a convenient box of the birch bark, at this season at least, when the sap is running, to carry a moss or other thing in safely. I have only to make three cuts and strip off a piece from a clear space some ten inches long, and then, rolling it up wrong side outward, as it naturally curls backward

as soon as taken off (the dry side shrinking, the moist swelling) and so keeps its place, I bend or fold the ends back on it, as if it were paper, and so close them, and, if I please, tie it round with a string of the same bark. This is resilient or elastic, and stands out from a plant, and also is not injured by moisture like paper. When the incision is made now, the crystalline drops of sap follow the knife down the tree. This box dries yellow or straw-colored, with large clouds of green derived from the inner bark. The inner bark of the *Betula populifolia* just laid bare is green with a yellow tinge; that of the *B. papyracea* is buff. The undermost layer of the outer bark of the last, next to the inner bark, is straw-colored and exceedingly thin and delicate, and smoother to the lips than any artificial tissue.

Bluets numerous and fully out at the Smith hillside between trough and Saw Mill Brook Falls.

Got to-day unquestionable *Salix humilis* in the Britton hollow, north of his shanty, but all there that I saw (and elsewhere as yet) [are] pistillate. It is apparently now in prime, and apparently the next to bloom after the various larger and earlier ones, all which I must call as yet *S. discolor*. This *S. humilis* is small-catkined and loves a dry soil.

A correspondent of the *Tribune* of April 24th, 1857, who signs "Lyndeborough, N. H., April 15, 1857. J. Herrick," says that he taps his sugar maples four feet from the ground so that cattle may not disturb the buckets, and that the sap will run as freely from the topmost branch as from a root. "Any one may learn this fact from the red squirrel, who, by the way, is a

famous sugar maker, and knows when to tap a tree and where to do it. He performs his tapping in the highest perpendicular limbs or twigs, and leaves the sun and wind to do the evaporating, and in due season and pleasant weather you will see him come round and with great gusto gather his sirup into his stomach."

The dense, green, rounded beds of mosses in springs and old water-troughs are very handsome now,—intensely cold green cushions.

Again we had, this afternoon at 2 o'clock, those wild, scudding wind-clouds in the north, spitting cold rain or sleet, with the curved lines of falling rain beneath. The wind is so strong that the thin drops fall on you in the sunshine when the cloud has drifted far to one side. The air is peculiarly clear, the light intense, and when the sun shines slanting under the dark scud, the willows, etc., rising above the dark flooded meadows, are lit with a fine straw-colored light like the spirits of trees.

I see winkle fungi comparatively fresh, whose green and reddish-brown and pale-buff circles above turn to light and dark slate and white, and so finally fade all to white. The beds of fine mosses on bare yellow mouldy soil are now in fruit and very warmly red in the sun when seen a little from one side.

No pages in my Journal are so suggestive as those which contain a rude sketch.

Suppose we were to drink only the yellow birch sap and mix its bark with our bread, would not its yellow curls sprout from our foreheads, and our breath and persons exhale its sweet aroma? What sappy vigor

there would be in our limbs! What sense we should have to explore the swamps with!

April 26. Riordan's cock follows close after me while spading in the garden, and hens commonly follow the gardener and plowman, just as cowbirds the cattle in a pasture.

I turn up now in the garden those large leather-colored nymphs.

P. M. — Up Assabet to White Cedar Swamp.

See on the water over the meadow, north of the boat's place, twenty rods from the nearest shore and twice as much from the opposite shore, a very large striped snake swimming. It swims with great ease, and lifts its head a foot above the water, darting its tongue at us. A snake thus met with on the water appears far more monstrous, not to say awful and venomous, than on the land. It is always something startling and memorable to meet with a serpent in the midst of a broad water, careering over it. But why had this one taken to the water? Is it possible that snakes ever hibernate in meadows which are subject to be overflown? This one when we approached swam toward the boat, apparently to rest on it, and when I put out my paddle, at once coiled itself partly around it and allowed itself to be taken on board. It did not hang down from the paddle like a dead snake, but stiffened and curved its body in a loose coil about it.

This snake was two feet and eleven inches long; the tail alone, seven and a quarter. There [were] one hundred and forty-five large abdominal plates, besides the

three smaller under the head, and sixty-five pairs of caudal scales. The central stripe on the back was not bright-yellow, as Storer describes, but a pale brown or clay-color; only the more indistinct lateral stripes were a greenish yellow, the *broad* dark-brown stripes being between; beneath greenish. Beneath the tail in centre, a dark, somewhat greenish line.

This snake was killed about 2 P. M.; *i. e.*, the head was perfectly killed then; yet the posterior half of the body was apparently quite alive and would curl strongly around the hand at 7 P. M. It had been hanging on a tree in the meanwhile.

I have the same objection to killing a snake that I have to the killing of any other animal, yet the most humane man that I know never omits to kill one.

I see a great many beetles, etc., floating and struggling on the flood.

We sit on the shore at Wheeler's fence, opposite Merriam's. At this season still we go seeking the sunniest, most sheltered, and warmest place. C. says this is the warmest place he has been in this year. We are in this like snakes that lie out on banks. In sunny and sheltered nooks we are in our best estate. There our thoughts flow and we flourish most. By and by we shall seek the shadiest and coolest place. How well adapted we are to our climate! In the winter we sit by fires in the house; in spring and fall, in sunny and sheltered nooks; in the summer, in shady and cool groves, or over water where the breeze circulates. Thus the average temperature of the year just suits us. Generally, whether in summer or winter, we are not sensible either of heat or cold.

A great part of our troubles are literally domestic or originate in the house and from living indoors. I could write an essay to be entitled "Out of Doors,"—undertake a crusade against houses. What a different thing Christianity preached to the house-bred and to a party who lived out of doors! Also a sermon is needed on economy of fuel. What right has my neighbor to burn ten cords of wood, when I burn only one? Thus robbing our half-naked town of this precious covering. Is he so much colder than I? It is expensive to maintain him in our midst. If some earn the salt of their porridge, are we certain that they earn the fuel of their kitchen and parlor? One man makes a little of the driftwood of the river or of the dead and refuse (unmarketable!) [wood] of the forest suffice, and Nature rejoices in him. Another, Herod-like, requires ten cords of the best of young white oak or hickory, and he is commonly esteemed a virtuous man. He who burns the most wood on his hearth is the least warmed by the sight of it growing. Leave the trim wood-lots to widows and orphan girls. Let men tread gently through nature. Let us religiously burn stumps and worship in groves, while Christian vandals lay waste the forest temples to build miles of meeting-houses and horse-sheds and feed their box stoves.

The white cedar is apparently just out. The higher up the tree, the earlier. Towed home an oak log some eighteen feet long and more than a foot through, with a birch withe around it and another birch fastened to that.

Father says he saw a boy with a snapping turtle yesterday.

April 27. I hear the prolonged *che che che che che*, etc., of the chip-bird this morning as I go down the street. It is a true April morning with east wind, the sky overcast with wet-looking clouds, and already some drops have fallen. It will surely rain to-day, but when it will begin in earnest and how long it will last, none can tell. The gardener makes haste to get in his peas, getting his son to drop them. He who requires fair weather puts off his enterprises and resumes them in his mind many times in the forenoon, as the clouds fall lower and sprinkle the fields, or lift higher and show light streaks. He goes half a mile and is overtaken by thick sprinkling drops, falling faster and faster. He pauses and says to himself, this may be merely a shower, which will soon be over, or it may come to a steady rain and last all day. He goes a few steps further, thinking over the condition of a wet man, and then returns. Again it holds up and he regrets that he had not persevered; but the next hour it is stiller and darker, with mist beneath the investing cloud, and then commences a gentle, deliberate rain, which will probably last all day. So he puts on patience and the house.

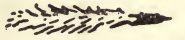
I dig up those reddish-brown dor-bugs in the garden. They stir a little.

Ricketson frequents his shanty by day and evening as much as his house, but does not sleep there, partly on account of his fear of lightning, which he cannot overcome. His timidity in this respect amounts to an idiosyncrasy. I was awaked there in a thunder-storm at midnight by Ricketson rushing about the house, calling to his sons to come down out of the attic where

they slept and bolting in to leave a light in my room. His fear of death is equally singular. The thought of it troubles him more perhaps than anything else. He says that he knows nothing about another life, he would like to stay here always. He does not know what to think of the Creator that made the lightning and established death.

April 28. A. M. — Surveying for Willard Farrar by Walden.

While standing by my compass over the supposed town bound beyond Wyman's, Farrar having just gone along northeast on the town line, I saw with the side of my eye some black creature crossing the road, reminding me of a black cat two thirds grown. Turning, I saw it plainly for half a minute. It crossed to my side about twenty-five feet off, apparently not observing me, and disappeared in the woods. It was perfectly black, for aught I could see (not brown), some eighteen or twenty inches or more in length from tip to tip, and I first thought of a large black weasel, then of a large black squirrel, then wondered if it could be a pine marten. I now try to think it a mink; yet it appeared *larger* and with a *shorter* body. It had a straight, low, bushy tail about two inches thick, short legs, and carried its tail and legs about on the same level. It was nearly, if not quite, as large as a muskrat. Has the mink such a tail?



Looking for an "old pine stump" mentioned in a deed and digging into a hillock with our hands to discover it, we turned up, amid the reddish virgin mould, — quite turned to soil, — a large body

of short, chunked, yellowish ants, say five twelfths (?) of an inch long, with their white larvæ (?). I perceived at more than a foot distant a very strong penetrating scent, yet agreeable and very spicy. It reminded me at first of the cherry pectoral; but it was not that; it was very strong lemon-peel. The "Library of Entertaining Knowledge" says that the odor of the wood ant will suffocate a frog dropped among them. Are not these the American "wood ant"?

Icy cold northwest wind, and snow whitening the mountains.

April 29. Purple finch sings on R. W. E.'s trees.

P. M. — To Dugan Desert.

At Tarbell's watering-place, see a dandelion, its conspicuous bright-yellow disk in the midst of a green space on the moist bank. It is thus I commonly meet with the earliest dandelion set in the midst of some liquid green patch. It seems a sudden and decided progress in the season. On the pitch pines beyond John Hosmer's, I see old cones within two feet of the ground on the trunk, — sometimes a circle of them around it, — which must have been formed on the young tree some fifteen years ago. Sweet-fern at entrance of Ministerial Swamp. A partridge there drums incessantly. C. says it makes his heart beat with it, or he feels it in his breast.

I find that that clayey-looking soil on which the bæomyces grows is a very thin crust on common sand only.

I have seen that pretty little hair-cap moss (*Pogo-*

natum brevicaule? [1]) for a fortnight out at least; like little pine trees; the staminate pretty, cup-shaped and shorter.

A steel-blue-black flattish beetle, which, handled, imparted a very disagreeable carrion-like scent to fingers.

Miles's Pond is running off. The sweet-gale, willows, etc., which have been submerged and put back, begin to show themselves and are trying to catch up with their fellows.

I am surprised to see how some blackberry pastures and other fields are filling up with pines, trees which I thought the cows had almost killed two or three years ago; so that what was then a pasture is now a young wood-lot. A little snow still lies in the road in one place, the relic of the snow of the 21st.

April 30. *Thursday.* A. M. — Surveying for Farrar and Heywood by Walden.

Hear a kingfisher at Goose Pond. Hear again the same bird heard at Conantum April 18th, which I think must be the ruby-crowned wren. As we stood looking for a bound by the edge of Goose Pond, a pretty large hawk alighted on an oak close by us. It probably has a nest near by and was concerned for its young.

The larch plucked yesterday sheds pollen to-day in house, probably to-day abroad. Balm-of-Gilead plucked yesterday, *not yet* (nor on May 1st) in house.

[1] No.

X

MAY, 1857

(ÆT. 39)

May 1. *Friday.* 2 P. M. — First notice the ring of the toad, as I am crossing the Common in front of the meeting-house. There is a cool and breezy south wind, and the ring of the first toad leaks into the general stream of sound, unnoticed by most, as the mill-brook empties into the river and the voyager cannot tell if he is above or below its mouth. The bell was ringing for town meeting, and every one heard it, but none heard this older and more universal bell, rung by more native Americans all the land over. It is a sound from amid the waves of the aerial sea, that breaks on our ears with the surf of the air, a sound that is almost breathed with the wind, taken into the lungs instead of being heard by the ears. It comes from far over or through the troughs of the aerial sea, like a petrel, and who can guess by what pool the singer sits? whether behind the meeting-house horse-sheds, or from over the burying-ground hill, or from the riverside? A new reign has commenced. Bufo the First has ascended to his throne, the surface of the earth, led into office by the south wind. Bufo the Double-chinned inflates his throat. Attend to his message. Take off your greatcoats, swains! and prepare for the summer campaign. Hop a few paces further toward your goals. The measures

I shall advocate are warmth, moisture, and low-flying insects.

White-throated sparrow in shrub oaks by Walden road. Is that moss with little green pendulous fruit on reddish stems *Bryum pyriforme?* Apparently a skunk has picked up what I took to be the dead shrew in the Goose Pond Path. How they ransack the paths these nights! The ground is spotted with their probings. Plucked the *Arum triphyllum*, three inches high, with its acrid corm (solid bulb), from the edge of Saw Mill Brook.

It is foolish for a man to accumulate material wealth chiefly, houses and land. Our stock in life, our real estate, is that amount of thought which we have had, which we have thought out. The ground we have thus created is forever pasturage for our thoughts. I fall back on to visions which I have had. What else adds to my possessions and makes me rich in all lands? If you have ever done any work with these finest tools, the imagination and fancy and reason, it is a new creation, independent on the world, and a possession forever. You have laid up something against a rainy day. You have to that extent cleared the wilderness.

Is a house but a gall on the face of the earth, a nidus which some insect has provided for its young?

May 2. Saturday. Building a fence between us and Mrs. Richardson. In digging the holes I find the roots of small apple trees, seven or eight feet distant and four or more inches in diameter, two feet underground, and as big as my little finger. This is two or three feet

beyond any branches. They reach at least twice as far as the branches. The branches get trimmed, the roots do not.

May 3. *Sunday.* A remarkably warm and pleasant morning.

A. M. — To Battle-Ground by river.

I heard the ring of toads at 6 A. M. The flood on the meadows, still high, is quite smooth, and many are out this still and suddenly very warm morning, pushing about in boats. Now, thinks many a one, is the time to paddle or push gently far up or down the river, along the still, warm meadow's edge, and perhaps we may see some large turtles, or muskrats, or otter, or rare fish or fowl. It will be a grand forenoon for a cruise, to explore these meadow shores and inundated maple swamps which we have never explored. Now we shall be recompensed for the week's confinement to shop or garden. We will spend our Sabbath exploring these smooth warm vernal waters. Up or down shall we go? To Fair Haven Bay and the Sudbury meadows, or to Ball's Hill and Carlisle Bridge? Along the meadow's edge, lined with willow and alders and maples, under the catkins of the early willow, and brushing those of the sweet-gale with our prow, where the sloping pasture and the plowed ground, submerged, are fast drinking up the flood. What fair isles, what remote coast shall we explore? What San Salvador or Bay of All Saints arrive at? All are tempted forth, like flies, into the sun. All isles seem fortunate and blessed to-day; all capes are of Good Hope. The same sun and calm that tempts

the turtles out tempts the voyagers. It is an opportunity to explore their own natures, to float along their own shores. The woodpecker cackles and the crow blackbird utters his jarring chatter from the oaks and maples. All well men and women who are not restrained by superstitious custom come abroad this morning by land or water, and such as have boats launch them and put forth in search of adventure. Others, less free or, it may be, less fortunate, take their station on bridges, watching the rush of water through them and the motions of the departing voyagers, and listening to the notes of blackbirds from over the smooth water. They see a swimming snake, or a muskrat dive, — airing and sunning themselves there until the first bell rings.

Up and down the town, men and boys that are under subjection are polishing their shoes and brushing their go-to-meeting clothes. I, a descendant of Northmen who worshipped Thor, spend my time worshipping neither Thor nor Christ; a descendant of Northmen who sacrificed men and horses, sacrifice neither men nor horses. I care not for Thor nor for the Jews. I sympathize not to-day with those who go to church in newest clothes and sit quietly in straight-backed pews. I sympathize rather with the boy who has none to look after him, who borrows a boat and paddle and in common clothes sets out to explore these temporary vernal lakes. I meet such a boy paddling along under a sunny bank, with bare feet and his pants rolled up above his knees, ready to leap into the water at a moment's warning. Better for him to read "Robinson Crusoe" than Baxter's "Saints' Rest."

I hear the soft, purring, stertorous croak of frogs on the meadow.[1]

The pine warbler is perhaps the commonest bird heard now from the wood-sides. It seems left [to] it almost alone to fill their empty aisles.

The above boy had caught a snapping turtle, the third he had got this year. The first he said he got the fore part of April. He also had caught a bullfrog sitting on the shore just now.

Thermometer from 1 to 2 P. M., at 78°. Neighbors come forth to view the expanding buds in their gardens.

I see where some fish, probably a pickerel, darted away from high on the meadows, toward the river, and swims so high that it makes a long ripple for twenty rods.

3 P. M. — To Cliffs.

In the pool which dries up in Jonathan Wheeler's orchard, I see toads, or maybe frogs, spread out on the surface, uttering a short, loud, peculiar croak, not like that of the early croaking frog, nor the smooth, purring, stertorous one of this morning, but a coarse belching croak, at a little distance like *quor* and *quar*, being on various keys, but nearer like *ow-oo-uk* though one syllable or *ar-r-r*. Thus they lie, perhaps within a foot or two and facing each other, and alternately throwing their heads back, *i. e.* upward, swelling their *white* throats and uttering this abominable noise.[2] Then one rushes upon the other, leaps upon him. They struggle

[1] Probably *Rana palustris*. *Vide* May 1st, 1858.

[2] [Spade-foot toads, it seems likely.]

and roll over and sink for a moment, and presently they show their heads again a foot or two apart. There are a dozen or more, with very prominent eyes, with bright golden irides.

In another pool, in Warren's meadow, I hear the ring of toads and the peep of hylodes, and, taking off my stockings and shoes, at length stand in their midst. There are a hundred toads close around me, copulating or preparing to. These look at a little distance precisely like the last, but no one utters that peculiar rough, belching croak, only their common musical ring, and occasionally a short, fainter, interrupted, quivering note, as of alarm. They are continually swimming to and leaping upon each other. I see many large reddish-brown ones, probably females, with small grayish ones lying flat on their backs, the fore feet clasped around them. These commonly lie flat on the bottom, often as if dead, but from time [to time] the under one rises with its load to the surface, puts its nose out and then sinks again. The single ones leap upon these double ones and roll them over in vain like the rest. It is the single ones that ring and are so active. They make great gray, yellowish, greenish, or whitish bubbles (different specimens being thus various), as big as their heads. One that rings within a foot of me seems to make the earth vibrate, and I feel it and am thrilled to my very spine, it is so terrene a sound. It reminds me of many a summer night on the river. A bubbling ring, which is continuous about a minute, and then its bag must be inflated again. When I move suddenly, it is the single ones chiefly that con-

ceal themselves. The others are not so easily disturbed. You would hardly believe that toads could be so excited and active. When that nearest ringer sounded, the very sod by my feet (whose spires rose above water) seemed to tremble, and the earth itself, and I was thrilled to my spine and vibrated to it. They like a rest for their toes when they ring. It is a sound as crowded with protuberant bubbles as the rind of an orange. A clear, ringing note with a bubbling trill. It takes complete possession of you, for you vibrate to it, and can hear nothing else.

At length, too, a hylodes or two were heard close about me, but not one was seen. The nearest seemed to have his residence in my ear alone. It took such possession of my ear that I was unable to appreciate the source whence it came.

It is so warm, mosquitoes alight on my hands and face.

As I approach the entrance to the spring path, I hear some chickadees *phe-be*-ing. One sings *phe-e — be' be — be' be*, just as if another struck in immediately after the usual strain.

Salix tristis is out to-day at least, perhaps yesterday, by what I may call S. tristis Path. *Viola ovata* is *pretty* common there.

Above the Cliffs, scare up a pair of turtle doves from the stubble, which go off with their shrill rattling whistle. *Corydalis glauca* is five inches high. The pistillate *Equisetum arvense* shows itself.

To-day we sit without fire.

Emerson says that Brewer tells him my "night warbler" is probably the Nashville warbler.

May 4. Rain. The barber tells me that the masons of New York tell him that they would prefer human hair to that of cattle to mix with their plastering.

Balm-of-Gilead pollen in house to-day; outdoors, say to-morrow, if fair.

Minott tells me of one Matthias Bowers, a native of Chelmsford and cousin of C. Bowers, a very active fellow, who used to sleep with him and when he found the door locked would climb over the roof and come in at the dormer-window. One Sunday, when they were repairing the old Unitarian church and there was a staging just above the belfry, he climbed up the lightning-rod and put his arm round the ball at the top of the spire and swung his hat there. He then threw it down and the crown was knocked out. Minott saw him do it, and Deacon White ordered him to come down. M. also told of a crazy fellow who got into the belfry of the Lincoln church with an axe and began to cut the spire down, but was stopped after he had done considerable damage.

When M. lived at Baker's, B. had a dog Lion, famous for chasing squirrels. The gray squirrels were numerous and used to run over the house sometimes. It was an old-fashioned house, slanting to one story behind, with a ladder from the roof to the ground. One day a gray squirrel ran over the house, and Lion, dashing after him up the ladder, went completely over the house and fell off the front side before he could stop, putting out one of his toes. But the squirrel did not put out any of his toes.

Wyman told Minott that he used to see *black snakes*

crossing Walden and would wait till they came ashore and then kill them. One day he saw a bull on the northerly side swim across to get at some cows on the south.

It has rained all day, and I see in the footpath across the Common, where water flows or has flown, a great many worms, apparently drowned. Did they not come out in unusual numbers last night because it was so warm, and so get overtaken by the rain? But how account for the worms said to be found in tubs of water?

Perhaps the most generally interesting event at present is a perfectly warm and pleasant day. It affects the greatest number, the well out of doors and the sick in chambers. No wonder the weather is the universal theme of conversation.

A warm rain; and the ring of the toads is heard all through it.

May 5. *Tuesday.* Building fence east of house.

Hear the *tull-lull* of a myrtle-bird [1] (very commonly heard for three or four days after). Have dug up in the garden this season half a dozen of those great leather-colored pupæ (with the tongue-case bent round to breast like a long urn-handle) of the sphinx moth. First potato-worm. Staminate *Salix rostrata*, possibly yesterday.

May 6. *Wednesday.* A beautiful and warm day. I go to build an arbor for R. W. E. The thrasher has been heard this morning. While at work I hear the bobolink and, methinks, peetweet along the brook

[1] White-throat sparrow.

(surely see it on the 9th). Sugar maple by Dr. Barrett's, possibly to-day.

May 7. A second fine day.

Small pewee and, methinks, golden robin (?).

May 8. A third fine day.

The sugar maple at Barrett's is now in full bloom.

I finish the arbor to-night. This has been the third of these remarkably warm and beautiful [days]. I have worked all the while in my shirt-sleeves. Summer has suddenly come upon us, and the birds all together. Some boys have bathed in the river.

Walk to first stone bridge at sunset. *Salix alba*, possibly the 6th. It is a glorious evening. I scent the expanding willow leaves (for there are very few blossoms yet) fifteen rods off. Already hear the cheerful, sprightly note of the yellowbird amid them. It is perfectly warm and still, and the green grass reminds me of June. The air is full of the fragrance of willow leaves. The high water stretches smooth around. I hear the sound of Barrett's sawmill with singular distinctness. The ring of toads, the note of the yellowbird, the rich warble of the red-wing, the thrasher on the hillside, the robin's evening song, the woodpecker tapping some dead tree across the water; and I see countless little fuzzy gnats in the air, and dust over the road, between me and the departed sun. Perhaps the evenings of the 6th and 7th were as pleasant. But such an evening makes a crisis in the year. I must make haste home and go out on the water.

I paddle to the Wheeler meadow east of hill after sundown. From amid the alders, etc., I hear the mew of the catbird and the *yorrick* of Wilson's thrush. One bullfrog's faint *er-er-roonk* from a distance. (Perhaps the *Amphibia*, better than any creatures, celebrate the changes of temperature.) One *dump* note. It grows dark around. The full moon rises, and I paddle by its light. It is an evening for the soft-snoring, *purring* frogs (which I suspect to be *Rana palustris*). I get within a few feet of them as they sit along the edge of the river and meadow, but cannot see them. Their croak is very fine or rapid, and has a soft, purring sound at a little distance. I see them paddling in the water like toads.

Within a week I have had made a pair of corduroy pants, which cost when done $1.60. They are of that peculiar clay-color, reflecting the light from portions of their surface. They have this advantage, that, beside being very strong, they will look about as well three months hence as now, — or as ill, some would say. Most of my friends are disturbed by my wearing them. I can get four or five pairs for what one ordinary pair would cost in Boston, and each of the former will last two or three times as long under the same circumstances. The tailor said that the stuff was not made in this country; that it was worn by the Irish at home, and now they would not look at it, but others would not wear it, durable and cheap as it is, because it is worn by the Irish. Moreover, I like the color on other accounts. Anything but black clothes. I was pleased the other day to see a son of Concord return after an ab-

sence of eight years, not in a shining suit of black, with polished boots and a beaver or silk hat, as if on a furlough from human duties generally, — a mere clothes-horse, — but clad in an honest clay-colored suit and a snug every-day cap. It showed unusual manhood. Most returning sons come home dressed for the occasion. The birds and beasts are not afraid of me now. A mink came within twenty feet of me the other day as soon as my companion had left me, and if I had had my gray sack on as well as my corduroys, it would perhaps have come quite up to me. Even farmers' boys, returning to their native town, though not unfamiliar with homely and dirty clothes, make their appearance on this new stage in a go-to-meeting suit.

May 9. Another *fine* day.

6 A. M. — On water.

Maryland yellow-throat. Aspen leaves one inch over. Hear stake-driver. Black and white creeper's *fine* note. *Er-te-ter-twee*, or evergreen-forest note. Golden-crowned thrush note. Kingbird.

P. M. To Gilson's Mill, Littleton.

George Brooks points to an old house of which one half the roof only has been shingled, etc., etc., and says he guessed it to be a widow's dower from this, and on inquiry found it so.

Went to Gilson's tumble-down mill and house. He appeared, licking his chaps after dinner, in a mealy coat, and suddenly asked in the midst of a sentence, with a shrug of his shoulders, "Is n't there something painted

on my back?" There were some marks in red chalk they used to chalk the bags with, and he said he thought he had felt his son at the mill chalking his back. He feared he was making an exhibition before strangers.

The boy speared fishes, chiefly suckers, pouts, etc. A fire in a hand-crate carried along the bank of the brook (Stony Brook). He had lately speared a sucker weighing five and a quarter pounds, which he sold; went back and forth some twenty-five rods and found the suckers less shy at last than at first. Saw otter there. I saw many perch at the foot of the falls. He said that they and trout could get up five or six feet over the rocks there into the pond, it being a much broken fall.

May 10. Cultivated cherry out.

P. M. — Up river.

Salix Babylonica behind Dodd's, how long? Say with *S. alba.* I observe that the fertile flowers of many plants are more late than the barren ones, as the sweet-gale (whose fertile are now in prime), the sweet-fern, etc.

See twenty or thirty tortoises on one stump by stone bridge and more still within a rod along the bank of E. Wood's ditch. Now the *Emys picta* lie out in great numbers, this suddenly warm weather, and when you go along the road within a few rods they tumble in. The banks of some ditches look almost as if paved with them.

I went looking for snapping turtles over the meadow south of railroad. Now I see one large head like a brown stake projecting three or four inches above the water four rods off, but it is slowly withdrawn, and I

paddle up and catch the fellow lying still in the dead grass there. Soon after I paddle within ten feet of one whose eyes like knobs appear on the side of the stake, and touch him with my paddle.

This side Clamshell, strawberries and cinquefoil are abundant. *Equisetum sylvaticum.*

There is a strong wind, against which I push and paddle. But now at last I do not go seeking the warm, sunny, and sheltered coves; the strong wind is enlivening and agreeable. It is a *washing* day. I love the wind at last.

Before night a sudden shower with some thunder and lightning; the first.

May 11. Warbling vireo and chewink. A very cold northwest wind. I hear they had a snow-storm yesterday in Vermont.

May 12. How rarely I meet with a man who can be free, even in thought! We live according to rule. Some men are bedridden; all, world-ridden. I take my neighbor, an intellectual man, out into the woods and invite him to take a new and absolute view of things, to empty clean out of his thoughts all institutions of men and start again; but he can't do it, he sticks to his traditions and his crotchets. He thinks that governments, colleges, newspapers, etc., are from everlasting to everlasting.

The *Salix cordata* var. *Torreyana* is distinguished by its naked ovaries more or less red-brown, with flesh-colored stigmas, with a distinct slender woolly rachis

and conspicuous stalks, giving the ament a loose and open appearance.

When I consider how many species of willow have been planted along the railroad causeway within ten years, of which no one knows the history, and not one in Concord beside myself can tell the name of one, so that it is quite a discovery to identify a single one in a year, and yet within this period the seeds of all these kinds have been conveyed from some other locality to this, I am reminded how much is going on that man wots not of.

While dropping beans in the garden at Texas just after sundown (May 13th), I hear from across the fields the note of the bay-wing, *Come here here there there quick quick quick or I'm gone* (which I have no doubt sits on some fence-post or rail there), and it instantly translates me from the sphere of my work and repairs all the world that we jointly inhabit. It reminds me of so many country afternoons and evenings when this bird's strain was heard far over the fields, as I pursued it from field to field. The spirit of its earth-song, of its serene and true philosophy, was breathed into me, and I saw the world as through a glass, as it lies eternally. Some of its aboriginal contentment, even of its domestic felicity, possessed me. What he suggests is permanently true. As the bay-wing sang many a thousand years ago, so sang he to-night. In the beginning God heard his song and pronounced it good, and hence it has endured. It reminded me of many a summer sunset, of many miles of gray rails, of many a rambling pasture, of the farmhouse far in the fields,

its milk-pans and well-sweep, and the cows coming home from pasture.

I would thus from time to time take advice of the birds, correct my human views by listening to their volucral (?). He is a brother poet, this small gray bird (or bard), whose muse inspires mine. His lay is an idyl or pastoral, older and sweeter than any that is classic. He sits on some gray perch like himself, on a stake, perchance, in the midst of the field, and you can hardly see him against the plowed ground. You advance step by step as the twilight deepens, and lo! he is gone, and in vain you strain your eyes to see whither, but anon his tinkling strain is heard from some other quarter. One with the rocks and with us.

Methinks I hear these sounds, have these reminiscences, only when well employed, at any rate only when I have no reason to be ashamed of my employment. I am often aware of a certain compensation of this kind for doing something from a sense of duty, even unconsciously. Our past experience is a never-failing capital which can never be alienated, of which each kindred future event reminds us. If you would have the song of the sparrow inspire you a thousand years hence, let your life be in harmony with its strain to-day.

I ordinarily plod along a sort of whitewashed prison entry, subject to some indifferent or even grovelling mood. I do not distinctly realize my destiny. I have turned down my light to the merest glimmer and am doing some task which I have set myself. I take incredibly narrow views, live on the limits, and have no

recollection of absolute truth. Mushroom institutions hedge me in. But suddenly, in some fortunate moment, the voice of eternal wisdom reaches me even, in the strain of the sparrow, and liberates me, whets and clarifies my senses, makes me a competent witness.[1]

The second amelanchier out, in garden. Some fir balsams, as Cheney's. Is not ours in the grove, with the chip-bird's nest in it, the *Abies Fraseri?* Its cones are short. I hear of, and also find, a ground-bird's (song sparrow's) nest with five eggs.

P. M. — To Miles Swamp, Conantum.

I hear a yorrick, apparently anxious, near me, utter from time to time a sharp grating *char-r-r*, like a fine watchman's rattle. As usual, I have not heard them sing yet. A night-warbler, plainly light beneath. It always flies to a new perch immediately after its song. Hear the *screep* of the parti-colored warbler.

Veronica serpyllifolia is abundantly out at Corner Spring. As I go along the hillside toward Miles Swamp, I mistake the very light gray cliff-sides east of the river at Bittern Cliff for amelanchier in bloom.

The brother of Edward Garfield (after dandelions!) tells me that two years ago, when he was cutting wood at Bittern Cliff in the winter, he saw something dark squatting on the ice, which he took to be a mink, and taking a stake he went to inspect it. It turned out to be a bird, a new kind of duck, with a long, slender, pointed bill (he thought red). It moved off backwards, hissing at him, and he threw his stake about a rod and partly

[1] [Channing, p. 93.]

broke its neck, then killed it. It was very lean and the river was nowhere open. He sent it to Waltham and sold it for twenty-five cents.

Black ash, maybe a day.

Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum. I see a whitish cocoon on a small carpinus. It is artfully made where there is a short crook in the main stem, so as to just fill the hollow and make an even surface, the stick forming one side.

May 13. Work in garden. I see a toad only an inch and a quarter long; so they must be several years growing.

P. M. — To Leaning Hemlocks.

A large bunch of oat spawn in meadow water. Scare up a black duck and apparently two summer ducks. Canoe birch, how long? Sternothærus.

May 14. P. M. — To Assabet Bath and stone bridge.

I hear two thrashers plainly singing in emulation of each other.

At the temporary brush fence pond, now going down, amid the sprout-land and birches, I see, within a dozen rods along its shore, one to three rods from edge, thirteen wood tortoises on the grass, at 4 P. M. this cloudy afternoon. This is apparently a favorite resort for them, — a shallow open pool of half an acre, which dries up entirely a few weeks later, in dryish, mossy ground in an open birch wood, etc., etc. They take refuge in the water and crawl out over the mossy ground. They lie

about in various positions, very conspicuous there, at every rod or two. They are of various forms and colors: some almost regularly oval or elliptical, even pointed behind, others very broad behind, more or less flaring and turned up on the edge; some a dull lead-color and almost smooth, others brown with dull-yellowish marks. I see one with a large dent three eighths of an inch deep and nearly two inches long in the middle of its back, where it was once partially crushed. Hardly one has a perfect shell. The males (?), with concave sternums; the females, even or convex. They have their reddish-orange legs stretched out often, listlessly, when you approach, draw in their heads with a hiss when you take them up, commonly taking a bit of stubble with them.

See a pair of marsh hawks, the smaller and lighter-colored male, with black tips to wings, and the large brown female, sailing low over J. Hosmer's sprout-land and screaming, apparently looking for frogs or the like. Or have they not a nest near? They hover very near me. The female, now so near, sails very grandly, with the outer wing turned or tilted up when it circles, and the bars on its tail when it turns, etc., reminding me of a great brown moth. Sometimes alone; and when it approaches its mate it utters a low, grating note like *cur-r-r*. Suddenly the female holds straight toward me, descending gradually. Steadily she comes on, without swerving, until only two rods off, then wheels.

I find an old bog-hoe left amid the birches in the low ground, the handle nearly rotted off. In the low birch

land north of the pear tree the old corn-hills are very plain still, and now each hill is a dry moss-bed, of various species of cladonia. What a complete change from a dusty corn-hill!

Abel Hosmer tells me that he has collected and sown white pine seed, and that he has found them in the crop of pigeons. (?)

Salix lucida at bridge; maybe staminate earlier. Herb-of-St.-Barbara, how long?

May 15. Black currant at R. W. E.'s.

Abel Hosmer thought that the *Salix alba* roots might reach half a dozen rods into his field as big as your finger. Thought that they made the grass grow as much as the locust; only they made it rough plowing by throwing the plow out.

May 16. P. M. — To Hill for pines.

The meadows are now mostly bare, the grass showing itself above the water that is left, and an unusual number of swallows are flying low over it. A yellow lily out, and, on the hill, a red cedar, maybe a day.

May 17. P. M. — Round Walden.

Gold-thread is abundantly out at Trillium Woods. The yellow birch catkins, now fully out or a little past prime, are very handsome now, numerous clusters of rich golden catkins hanging straight down at a height from the ground on the end of the pendulous branches, amid the *just* expanding leaf-buds. It is like some great chandelier hung high over the underwood. So,

too, with the canoe birch. Such black as I see is not quite so forward yet. The canoe, yellow, and black birches are among the handsomest trees when in bloom. The bunches of numerous rich golden catkins, hanging straight down on all sides and trembling in the breeze, contrast agreeably with the graceful attitude of the tree, commonly more or less inclined, the leaves not being enough expanded to conceal them in the least. They should be seen against evergreens on a hillside, — something so light and airy, so graceful. What nymphs are they?

What was that peculiar spawn on a submerged alder stem seen the 13th? It looked like a fresh light-colored fungus, flattish and circular, a third of an inch over, and waving in the water, but, taken out, hung down longer. In the midst of this jelly were minute eggs.

I just notice the fertile sweet-fern bloom on *tall* plants,[1] where the sterile catkins are falling off above it. Most plants have none.

Two cocoons of apparently the *Attacus Promethea* on a small black birch, the silk wound round the leaf-stalk.

May 18. P. M. — To Bateman's Pond *via* Yellow Birch Swamp with Pratt.

Pratt says he saw the first rhodora and cultivated pear out yesterday. Many are now setting out pines and other evergreens, transplanting some wildness into the neighborhood of their houses. I do not know of

[1] And others.

a white pine that has been set out twenty-five years in the town. It is a new fashion. Judging from the flowering of such of the plants as I notice, this is a backward season. There is a very grand and picturesque old yellow birch in the old cellar northwest the yellow birch swamp. Though this stands out in open land, it does not shed its pollen yet, and its catkins are not much more than half elongated, but it is very beautiful as it is, with its dark-yellowish tassels variegated with brown. Yet in the swamp westerly the yellow birches are in full bloom, and many catkins strew the ground. They are four or five inches long when in bloom. They *begin* to shed their pollen at the base of the catkin, as, I think, other birches do.

In the yellow birch and ash swamp west of big yellow birch, I hear the fine note of cherry-birds, much like that of young partridges, and see them on the ash trees. *Viola Muhlenbergii* abundantly out, how long? The fever-bush in this swamp is very generally killed, at least the upper part, so that it has not blossomed. This is especially the case in the swamp; on higher ground, though exposed, it is in better condition. It appears to have been killed in the spring, for you see the unexpanded flower-buds quite conspicuous. Pratt shows me the fringed gentian stems by a swamp northeast of Bateman's Pond, but we find no traces of a new plant, and I think it must be annual there. The violet wood-sorrel is apparently later than the *Oxalis stricta*, not now so forward, lower, and darker green, only a few of the leaves showing that purplish mark. Hear the pepe, how long? In woods close behind Easterbrook's

Bateman's Pond

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place, whence it probably strayed, several Canada plums now in bloom, showing the pink. Interesting to see a wild apple tree in the old cellar there, though with a forward caterpillar's nest on it. Call it *Malus cellaris*, that grows in an old cellar-hole.[1] Pedicularis, some time. The blossom-buds of the *Cornus florida* have been killed when an eighth of an inch in diameter, and are black within and fall on the least touch or jar; all over the town. There is a large tree on the further side the ravine near Bateman's Pond and another by some beeches on the rocky hillside a quarter of a mile northeast. In the swampy meadow north of this Pratt says he finds the calla. The *Rubus triflorus* is well out there on the hummocks. The white ash is not yet out in most favorable places. The red huckleberry looks more forward — blossom-buds more swollen — than those of common there. Some high blueberry. Pratt has found perfectly white *Viola pedata* behind Easterbrook place, and cultivated them, but now lost them. Says he saw two "black" snakes intertwined (copulating?) yesterday.

May 19. A. M. — Surveying D. Shattuck's woodlot beyond Peter's.

See myriads of minute pollywogs, recently hatched, in the water of Moore's Swamp on Bedford road. Digging again to find a stake in woods, came across a nest or colony of wood ants, yellowish or sand-color, a third of an inch long, with their white grubs, now squirming, still larger, and emitting that same pungent

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 316; Riv. 388.]

spicy odor, perhaps too pungent to be compared with lemon-peel. This is the second time I have found them in this way this spring (*vide* April 28th). Is not the pungent scent emitted by wasps quite similar?

I see the ferns all blackened on the hillside next the meadow, by the frost within a night or two.

That ant scent is not at all sickening, but tonic, and reminds me of a bitter flavor like that of peach-meats.

May 20. Began to rain the latter part of yesterday, and rains all day against all desire and expectation, raising the river and, in low land, rotting the seed. Gardeners wish that their land had not been planted nor plowed. Postpone your journey till the May storm is over.

It has been confidently asserted and believed that if the cold in the winter exceeded a certain degree it surely killed the peach blossoms. Last winter we had greater cold than has ever been generally observed here, and yet it is a remarkable spring for peach blossoms; thus once for all disproving that assertion. Everything in the shape of a peach tree blossoms this season, even a mutilated shrub on the railroad causeway, sprung from a stone which some passenger cast out. Nevertheless the lowest limbs, which were covered by the drifts, have blossomed much the earliest and fullest, as usual, and this *after-blow* is quite unexpected. Peach trees are revealed along fences where they were quite unobserved before.

The expression in Sophocles' Œdipus at Colonos,

"White Colonos," said to refer to the silvery soil, reminded me at first of the tracts now whitened by the pyrus blossoms, which may be mistaken for hoary rocks. *Vide* this description of Colonos. Have all the Canada plums that striking pink color at the base of the blossoms at last?

I find that the corydalis sprig which I brought home five days ago keeps fresh and blossoms remarkably well in water, — its delicate bright flesh-colored or pink flowers and glaucous leaves!

How suddenly, after all, pines seem to shoot up and fill the pastures! I wonder that the farmers do not earlier encourage their growth. To-day, perchance, as I go through some run-out pasture, I observe many young white pines dotting the field, where last year I had noticed only blackberry vines; but I see that many are already destroyed or injured by the cows which have dived into them to scratch their heads or for sport (such is their habit; they break off the leading shoot and bend down the others of different evergreens), or perchance where the farmer has been mowing them down, and I think the owner would rather have a pasture here than a wood-lot. A year or two later, as I pass through the same field, I am surprised to find myself in a flourishing young wood-lot, from which the cows are now carefully fenced out, though there are many open spaces, and I perceive how much further advanced it would have been if the farmer had been more provident and had begun to abet nature a few years earlier. It is surprising by what leaps — two or three feet in a season — the pines stretch toward the

sky, affording shelter also to various hardwoods which plant themselves in their midst.

I do not know a white pine in the town which has been set out twenty-five years.

May 21. Rains still, more or less, all day. But it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good; this weather is good for cuttings and transplanted trees.

P. M. — To Hill.

Sassafras (fertile) will apparently bloom to-morrow. These, too, — the young trees, — have been killed the past winter, like the fever-bush.

There is, leaning over the Assabet at the Grape Bower, an amelanchier variety *Botryapium* about five inches in diameter and some twenty-eight feet long, a light and graceful tree. The leaves of this are, as usual, nearly smooth and quite brown, of a delicate tint (purplish?). At the spring just beyond, is another amelanchier, and other small ones are not uncommon, differing from the last, not in the form of its petals and leaves, but the latter are green, or very slightly streaked with purplish. It seems to be a common variety of the variety *Botryapium* and quite downy, though not so downy as those of the *oblongifolia*. The bark of these trees is much like that of a maple.

I find checkerberries still fresh and abundant. Last year was a remarkable one for them. They lurk under the low leaves, scarcely to be detected, often, as you are standing up, almost below the level of the ground, dark-scarlet berries, some of them half an inch in diameter, broad pear-shaped, of a pale or hoary pink color be-

neath. The peduncle curves downward between two leaves. There they lurk under the glossy, dark-green, brown-spotted leaves, close to the ground. They make a very handsome nosegay.

I saw yesterday a parrot exceedingly frightened in its cage at a window. It rushed to the bars and struggled to get out. A piece of board had been thrown from the window above to the ground, which probably the parrot's instinct had mistaken for a hawk. Their eyes are very open to danger from above.

The staminate buds of the black spruce are quite a bright red.

May 22. After two or three days more of rainy weather, it is fair and warm at last. Thermometer seventy-odd degrees above zero. When the May storm is over, then the summer is fairly begun.

9 A. M. — I go up the Assabet in boat to stone bridge.

Is it not summer when we do not go seeking sunny and sheltered places, but also love the wind and shade?

As I stand on the sand-bank below the Assabet stone bridge and look up through the arch, the river makes a pretty picture. It is perfectly smooth above the bridge and appears two or three feet higher (it is probably half as much) than below and rushes to its fall very regularly thus, the bridge partially damming the stream: the smoothness extends part way under the bridge in the middle, the turbulent water rushing down each side.

May 23. P. M. — To Holden Swamp by boat.

River still high *generally* over the meadows. Can sail across the Hubbard meadow. Off Staples wood-lot, hear the *ah tche tche chit-i-vet* of the redstart.

Tortoises out again abundantly. Each particularly warm and sunny day brings them out on to every floating rail and stump. I count a dozen within three or four feet on a rail. It is a tortoise day. I hear one regular bullfrog trump, and as I approach the edge of the Holden Swamp, the tree-toads. Hear the pepe there, and the redstarts, and the chestnut-sided warbler. It appears striped slate and black above, white beneath, yellow-crowned with black side-head, two yellow bars on wing, white side-head below the black, black bill, and long chestnut streak on side. Its song lively and rather long, about as the summer yellowbird, but not in two bars; *tse tse tse* | *te tsah tsah tsah* | *te sah yer se* is the rhythm. *Kalmia glauca* yesterday. Rhodora, on shore there, a little before it. Nemopanthes, a day or two.

This is the time and place to hear the new-arriving warblers, the first fine days after the May storm. When the leaves generally are just fairly expanding, and the deciduous trees are hoary with them, — a silvery hoariness, — then, about the edges of the swamps in the woods, these birds are flitting about in the tree-tops like gnats, catching the insects about the expanding leaf-buds.

I wade in the swamp for the kalmia, amid the water andromeda and the sphagnum, scratching my legs with the first and sinking deep in the last. The water is now gratefully cool to my legs, so far from being poisoned

in the strong water of the swamp. It is a sort of baptism for which I had waited.

At Miles Swamp, the carpinus sterile catkins, apparently a day or two, but I see no fertile ones, unless that is one (pressed) at the southeast edge of swamp near grafted apple, and its catkins are effete! Hear the first veery strain. The small twigs of the carpinus are singularly tough, as I find when I try to break off the flowers. They bend without breaking. Sand cherry at Lupine Bank, possibly a day. Sassafras, a day or two. Fringed polygala, I hear of.

The first goldfinch twitters over, and at evening I hear the *spark* of a nighthawk.

May 24. A. M. — To Hill.

White ash, apparently yesterday, at Grape Shore but not at Conantum. What a singular appearance for some weeks its great masses of dark-purple anthers have made, fruit-like on the trees!

A very warm morning. Now the birds sing more than ever, methinks, now, when the leaves are fairly expanding, the first really warm summer days. The water on the meadows is perfectly smooth nearly all the day. At 3 P. M. the thermometer is at 88°. It soon gets to be quite hazy. Apple out. Heard one speak to-day of his sense of awe at the thought of God, and suggested to him that awe was the cause of the potato-rot.[1] The same speaker dwelt on the sufferings of life, but my advice was to go about one's business, suggesting that no ecstasy was ever interrupted, nor its

[1] [Channing, p. 89.]

fruit blasted. As for completeness and roundness, to be sure, we are each like one of the laciniæ of a lichen, a torn fragment, but not the less cheerfully we expand in a moist day and assume unexpected colors. We want no completeness but intensity of life. Hear the first cricket as I go through a warm hollow, bringing round the summer with his everlasting strain.[1]

May 25. P. M. — With Ricketson to my boat under Fair Haven Hill.

In Hubbard's Grove, hear the shrill chattering of downy woodpeckers, very like the red squirrel's *tche tche*. Thermometer at 87° at 2.30 P. M. It is interesting to hear the bobolinks from the meadow sprinkle their lively strain along amid the tree-tops as they fly over the wood above our heads. It resounds in a novel manner through the aisles of the wood, and at the end that fine buzzing, wiry note. The black spruce of Holden's, apparently yesterday, but not the 23d. What a glorious crimson fire as you look up to the sunlight through the thin edges of the scales of its cones! So intensely glowing in their cool green beds! while their purplish sterile blossoms shed pollen on you. Took up four young spruce and brought them home in the boat.

After all, I seem to have distinguished only one spruce, and that the black, judging by the cones, — perhaps the dark and light varieties of it, for the last is said to be very like the white spruce. The white spruce cones are cylindrical and have an entire firm edge to the scales, and the needles are longer.

[1] [*Daniel Ricketson and his Friends*, pp. 355, 356.]

Though the river is thus high, we bathe at Cardinal Shore and find the water unexpectedly warm and the air also delicious. Thus we are baptized into nature.

May 26. Pink azalea in garden. Mountain-ash a day; also horse-chestnut the same. Beach plum well out, several days at least. Wood pewee, and Minott heard a loon go laughing over this morning.

The vireo days have fairly begun. They are now heard amid the elm-tops. Thin coats and straw hats are worn.

I have noticed that notional nervous invalids, who report to the community the exact condition of their heads and stomachs every morning, as if they alone were blessed or cursed with these parts; who are old betties and quiddles, if men; who can't eat their breakfasts when they are ready, but play with their spoons, and hanker after an ice-cream at irregular hours; who go more than half-way to meet any invalidity, and go to bed to be sick on the slightest occasion, in the middle of the brightest forenoon, — improve the least opportunity to be sick; — I observe that such are self-indulgent persons, without any regular and absorbing employment. They are nice, discriminating, experienced in all that relates to bodily sensations. They come to you stroking their wens, manipulating their ulcers, and expect you to do the same for them. Their religion and humanity stick. They spend the day manipulating their bodies and doing no work; can never get their nails clean.

Some of the earliest willows about warm edges of woods are gone to seed and downy.

P. M. — To Saw Mill Brook.

It is very hazy after a sultry morning, but the wind is getting east and cool. The oaks are in the gray, or a little more, and the silvery leafets of the deciduous trees invest the woods like a permanent mist. At the same season with this haze of buds comes also the kindred haziness of the air.

I see the common small reddish butterflies.

Very interesting now are the red tents of expanding oak leaves, as you go through sprout-lands, — the crimson velvet of the black oak and the more pinkish white oak. The salmon and pinkish-red canopies or umbrellas of the white oak are particularly interesting. The very sudden expansion of the great hickory buds, umbrella-wise. Now, at last, all leaves dare unfold, and twigs begin *to shoot.*

As I am going down the footpath from Britton's camp to the spring, I start a pair of nighthawks (they had the white on the wing) from amid the dry leaves at the base of a bush, a bunch of sprouts, and away they flitted in zigzag noiseless flight a few rods through the sprout-land, dexterously avoiding the twigs, uttering a faint hollow *what,* as if made by merely closing the bill, and one alighted flat on a stump.

On those carpinus trees which have fertile flowers, the sterile are effete and drop off.

The red choke-berry not in bloom, while the black is, for a day or more at least.

Roadside near Britton's camp, see a grosbeak, ap-

parently female of the rose-breasted, quite tame, as usual, brown above, with black head and a white streak over the eye, a less distinct one beneath it, two faint bars on wings, dirty-white bill, white breast, dark spotted or streaked, and from time [to time] utters a very sharp *chirp* of alarm or interrogation as it peers through the twigs at me.

A lady's-slipper. At Cliffs, no doubt, before. At Abel Brooks's (or Black Snake, or Red Cherry, or Rye) Hollow, hear the wood thrush.

In Thrush Alley, see one of those large ant-hills, recently begun, the grass and moss partly covered with sand over a circle two feet in diameter, with holes two to five inches apart, and the dry sand is dark-spotted with the fresh damp sand about each hole.

My mother was telling to-night of the sounds which she used to hear summer nights when she was young and lived on the Virginia Road, — the lowing of cows, or cackling of geese, or the beating of a drum as far off as Hildreth's, but above all Joe Merriam whistling to his team, for he was an admirable whistler. Says she used to get up at midnight and go and sit on the door-step when all in the house were asleep, and she could hear nothing in the world but the ticking of the clock in the house behind her.

May 27. P. M. — To Hill.

I hear the sound of fife and drum the other side of the village, and am reminded that it is May Training. Some thirty young men are marching in the streets in two straight sections, with each a very heavy and warm

cap for the season on his head and a bright red stripe down the legs of his pantaloons, and at their head march two with white stripes down their pants, one beating a drum, the other blowing a fife. I see them all standing in a row by the side of the street in front of their captain's residence, with a dozen or more ragged boys looking on, but presently they all remove to the opposite side, as it were with one consent, not being satisfied with their former position, which probably had its disadvantages. Thus they march and strut the better part of the day, going into the tavern two or three times, to abandon themselves to unconstrained positions out of sight, and at night they may be seen going home singly with swelling breasts.

When I first saw them as I was ascending the Hill, they were going along the road to the Battle-Ground far away under the hill, a fifer and a drummer to keep each other company and spell one another. Ever and anon the drum sounded more hollowly loud and distinct, as if they had just emerged from a subterranean passage, though it was only from behind some barn, and following close behind I could see two platoons of awful black beavers, rising just above the wall, where the warriors were stirring up the dust of Winter Street, passing Ex-Captain Abel Heywood's house, probably with trailed arms. There might have been some jockey in their way, spending his elegant leisure teaching his horse to stand fire, or trying to run down an orphan boy. I also hear, borne down the river from time to time, regular reports of small arms from Sudbury or Wayland, where they are probably firing by platoons.

Celtis occidentalis, perhaps yesterday. How the staminate flowers drop off, even before opening! I perceived that rare meadow fragrance on the 25th. Is it not the sweet-scented vernal grass? [1] I see what I have called such, now very common. The earliest thorn on hill, a day or more. Hemlock, apparently a day or two. Some butternut catkins; the leaves have been touched by frost. This is blossom week, beginning last Sunday (the 24th). At evening, the first bat.

May 28. Rain again in the night, and this forenoon, more or less. In some places the ground is strewn with apple blossoms, quite concealing it, as white and thick as if a snow-storm had occurred.

May 29. P. M. — To Lee's Cliff.

A fine-grained air, June-like, after a cloudy, rain-threatening or rainy morning. Sufficient [*sic*] with a still, clear air in which the hum of insects is heard, and the sunniness contrasts with the shadows of the freshly expanded foliage, like the glances of an eye from under the dark eyelashes of June. The grass is not yet dry. The birds sing more lively than ever now after the rain, though it is only 2 P. M.

On the Corner road I overtake a short, thick-set young man dressed in thick blue clothes, with a large basket of scions, etc., on his arm, who has just come from Newton in the cars and is going to graft for Lafayette Garfield, thus late. He does not think much of the Baldwin, and still less of the Porter. The last is too

[1] Think not, but perceive that in any case.

sour! and, above all, does not bear well!! Has set more scions of Williams' Favorite than of any other, and thinks much of Seaver's apple, a sweeting, etc. Verily, it is all *de gustibus*. Having occasion to speak of his father, who had been unfortunate, he said, "We boys (his sons) clubbed together and bought the old fellow a farm" just before he died. He had a very broad, round face, and short front teeth half buried in the gums, for he exposed the whole of his gums when he opened his mouth.

I think I have noticed that coarse-natured farmers' boys, etc., have not a sufficiently fine and delicate taste to appreciate a high-flavored apple. It is commonly too acid for them, and they prefer some tame, sweet thing, fit only for baking, as a pumpkin sweeting.

Men derive very various nutriment from the same nature, their common habitat, like plants. Some derive, as it were directly from the soil, a brawny body, and their cheeks bulge out like pumpkin sweetings. They seem more thoroughly naturalized here, and the elements are kinder to them. They have more of the wind and rain and meadow muck in their composition. They flourish in the swampy soil like vegetables and do not fear toothache or neuralgia. Some grow like a pumpkin pine, at least. They fish and hunt and get the meadow-hay. Compared with ordinary men, they grow like a Rohan potato beside a Lady's-Finger. Their system has great power of assimilation. The soil is native to them. As different elements go to the composition of two human bodies as the thoughts that occupy their brains are different. How much more readily one na-

ture assimilates to beef and potatoes and makes itself a brawny body of them, than another!

We sat and talked a spell at the Corner Spring. What is the new warbler I see and hear frequently now, with apparently a black head, white side-head, brown back, forked tail, and light legs?

The sun came out an hour or more ago, rapidly drying the foliage, and for the first time this year I noticed the little shades produced by the foliage which had expanded in the rain, and long narrow dark lines of shade along the hedges or willow-rows. It was like the first bright flashings of an eye from under dark eyelashes after shedding warm tears.

Now I see a great dark low-arching cloud in the northwest already dropping rain there and steadily sweeping southeast, as I go over the first Conantum Hill from the spring. But I trust that its southwest end will drift too far north to strike me. The rest of the sky is quite serene, sprinkled here and there with bright downy, glowing summer clouds. The grass was not yet dried before this angry summer-shower cloud appeared. I go on, uncertain whether it is broad or thin and whether its heel will strike me or not.

How universal that strawberry-like fragrance of the fir-balsam cone and wilted twig! My meadow fragrance (also perceived on hillsides) reminds me of it. Methinks that the fragrance of the strawberry may stand for a large class of odors, as the terebinthine odors of firs and arbor-vitæ and cedar (as the harp stands for music). There is a certain sting to it, as to them.

Black shrub oaks well out. *Oxalis stricta.*

The *Veronica serpyllifolia*, now erect, is commonly found in moist depressions or hollows in the pastures, where perchance a rock has formerly been taken out and the grass is somewhat thicker and deeper green; also in the grassy ruts of old, rarely used cart-paths.

Red and black oaks are out at Lee's Cliff, well out, and already there are crimson spots on the red oak leaves. Also the fine red *mammillæ* galls stud the black cherry leaves. Galls begin with the very unfolding of the leaves. The *Polygonatum pubescens* out there. Some, nay most, *Turritis stricta* quite out of bloom.

Fair Haven Lake now, at 4.30 P. M., is perfectly smooth, reflecting the darker and glowing June clouds as it has not before. Fishes incessantly dimple it here and there, and I see afar, approaching steadily but diagonally toward the shore of the island, some creature on its surface, maybe a snake, — but my glass shows it to be a muskrat, leaving two long harrow-like ripples behind. Soon after, I see another, quite across the pond on the Baker Farm side, and even distinguish that to be a muskrat. The fishes, methinks, are busily breeding now. These things I see as I sit on the top of Lee's Cliff, looking into the light and dark eye of the lake. The heel of that summer-shower cloud, seen through the trees in the west, has extended further south and looks more threatening than ever. As I stand on the rocks, examining the blossoms of some forward black oaks which close overhang it, I think I hear the sound of flies against my hat. No, it is scattered raindrops, though the sky is perfectly clear above me, and the cloud from which they come is yet far on

one side. I see through the tree-tops the thin vanguard of the storm scaling the celestial ramparts, like eager light infantry, or cavalry with spears advanced. But from the west a great, still, ash-colored cloud comes on. The drops fall thicker, and I seek a shelter under the Cliffs. I stand under a large projecting portion of the Cliff, where there is ample space above and around, and I can move about as perfectly protected as under a shed. To be sure, fragments of rock look as if they would fall, but I see no marks of recent ruin about me.

Soon I hear the low all-pervading hum of an approaching hummingbird circling above the rock, which afterward I mistake several times for the gruff voices of men approaching, unlike as these sounds are in some respects, and I perceive the resemblance even when I know better. Now I am sure it is a hummingbird, and now that it is two farmers approaching. But presently the hum becomes more sharp and thrilling, and the little fellow suddenly perches on an ash twig within a rod of me, and plumes himself while the rain is fairly beginning. He is quite out of proportion to the size of his perch. It does not acknowledge his weight.

I sit at my ease and look out from under my lichen-clad rocky roof, half-way up the Cliff, under freshly leafing ash and hickory trees on to the pond, while the rain is falling faster and faster, and I am rather glad of the rain, which affords me this experience. The rain has compelled me to find the cosiest and most homelike part of all the Cliff. The surface of the pond, though the rain dimples it all alike and I perceive no

wind, is still divided into irregular darker and lighter spaces, with distinct boundaries, as it were *watered* all over. Even now that it rains very hard and the surface is all darkened, the boundaries of those spaces are not quite obliterated. The countless drops seem to spring again from its surface like stalagmites.

A mosquito, sole living inhabitant of this antrum, settles on my hand. I find here sheltered with me a sweet-briar growing in a cleft of the rock above my head, where perhaps some bird or squirrel planted it. Mulleins beneath. *Galium Aparine*, just begun to bloom, growing next the rock; and, in the earth-filled clefts, columbines, some of whose cornucopias strew the ground. *Ranunculus bulbosus* in bloom; saxifrage; and various ferns, as spleenwort, etc. Some of these plants are never rained on. I perceive the buttery-like scent of barberry bloom from over the rock, and now and for some days the bunches of effete white ash anthers strew the ground.

It lights up a little, and the drops fall thinly again, and the birds begin to sing, but now I see a new shower coming up from the southwest, and the wind seems to have changed somewhat. Already I had heard the low mutterings of its thunder — for this is a thunder-shower — in the midst of the last. It seems to have shifted its quarters merely to attack me on a more exposed side of my castle. Two foes appear where I had expected none. But who can calculate the tactics of the storm? It is a first regular summer thunder-shower, preceded by a rush of wind, and I begin to doubt if my quarters will prove a sufficient shelter. I am fairly

besieged and know not when I shall escape. I hear the still roar of the rushing storm at a distance, though no trees are seen to wave. And now the forked flashes descending to the earth succeed rapidly to the hollow roars above, and down comes the deluging rain. I hear the alarmed notes of birds flying to a shelter. The air at length is cool and chilly, the atmosphere is darkened, and I have forgotten the smooth pond and its reflections. The rock feels cold to my body, as if it were a different season of the year. I almost repent of having lingered here; think how far I should have got if I had started homeward. But then what a condition I should have been in! Who knows but the lightning will strike this cliff and topple the rocks down on me? The crashing thunder sounds like the overhauling of lumber on heaven's loft. And now, at last, after an hour of steady confinement, the clouds grow thin again, and the birds begin to sing. They make haste to conclude the day with their regular evening songs (before the rain is fairly over) according to the program. The pepe on some pine tree top was heard almost in the midst of the storm. One or two bullfrogs trump. They care not how wet it is. Again I hear the still rushing, all-pervading roar of the withdrawing storm, when it is at least half a mile off, wholly beyond the pond, though no trees are seen to wave. It is simply the sound of the countless drops falling on the leaves and the ground. You were not aware what a sound the rain made. Several times I attempt to leave my shelter, but return to it. My first stepping abroad seems but a signal for the rain to commence again. Not till after an hour and a half do I

escape. After all, my feet and legs are drenched by the wet grass.[1]

Those great hickory buds, how much they contained! You see now the large reddish scales turned back at the base of the new twigs. Suddenly the buds burst, and those large pinnate leaves stretched forth in various directions.

I see and hear the cuckoo. The *Salix nigra*, apparently several days, at Corner Bridge.

Many of the black spruce have the terminal twigs dead. They are a slow-growing tree. It is encouraging to see thrifty-growing white pines by their side, which have added three feet to their height the last year.

With all this opportunity, this comedy and tragedy, how near all men come to doing nothing! It is strange that they did not make us more intense and emphatic, that they do not goad us into some action. Generally, with all our desires and restlessness, we are no more likely to embark in any enterprise than a tree is to walk to a more favorable locality. The seaboard swarms with adventurous and rowdy fellows, but how unaccountably they train and are held in check! They are as likely to be policemen as anything. It exhausts their wits and energy merely to get their living, and they can do no more. The Americans are very busy and adventurous sailors, but all in somebody's employ, — as hired men. I have not heard of one setting out in his own bark, if only to run down our own coast on a voyage of adventure or observation, on his own account.

[1] *Vide* forward [next date].

May 30. P. M. — To chestnut oaks.

I think that there are many chestnut-sided warblers this season. They are pretty tame. One sits within six feet of me, though not still. He is much painted up.

Blue-stemmed goldenrod is already a foot high. I see the geranium and two-leaved Solomon's-seal out, the last abundant. The red pyrus by the path, not yet, but probably the same elsewhere.

The young black oak leafets are dark red or reddish, thick and downy; the scarlet oak also are somewhat reddish, thick and downy, or thin and green and little downy, like red oak, but rather more deeply cut; the red oak broad, thin, green and not downy; the white pink-red. Was it not a whip-poor-will I scared up at the base of a bush in the woods to-day, that went off with a clumsy flight?

By the path near the northeast shore of Flint's Pond, just before reaching the wall by the brook, I see what I take to be an uncommonly large *Uvularia sessilifolia* flower, but, looking again, am surprised to find it the *Uvularia perfoliata*, which I have not found hereabouts before. It is a taller and much more erect plant than the other, with a larger flower, methinks. It is considerably past its prime and probably began with the other.

Chestnut oak not yet in bloom, though the black and scarlet are well out in ordinary places. Its young leaves have a reddish-brown tinge. All the large trees are cut down. The white oak is not out.

It is remarkable that many beach and chestnut oak leaves, which so recently expanded, have already attained their full size! How they launch themselves forth

to the light! How suddenly Nature spreads her umbrellas! How little delay in expanding leaves! They seem to expand before our eyes, like the wings of moths just fallen from the cocoon.

Buttercups thickly spot the churchyard.

Perhaps I could write meditations under a rock in a shower.

When first I had sheltered myself under the rock, I began at once to look out on the pond with new eyes, as from my house. I was at Lee's Cliff as I had never been there before, had taken up my residence there, as it were. Ordinarily we make haste away from all opportunities to be where we have instinctively endeavored to get. When the storm was over where I was, and only a few thin drops were falling around me, I plainly saw the rear of the rain withdrawing over the Lincoln woods south of the pond, and, above all, heard the grand rushing sound made by the rain falling on the freshly green forest, a very different sound when thus heard at a distance from what it is when we are in the midst of it. In the latter case we are soothed by a gentle pattering and do not suspect the noise which a rainstorm makes. This Cliff thus became my house. I inhabited it. When, at length, it cleared up, it was unexpectedly early and light, and even the sun came out and shone warm on my back as I went home. Large puddles occupied the cart-paths and rose above the grass in the fields.

In the midst of the shower, though it was not raining very hard, a black and white creeper came and inspected the limbs of a tree before my rock, in his usual

zigzag, prying way, head downward often, and when it thundered loudest, heeded it not. Birds appear to be but little incommoded by the rain. Yet they do not often sing in it.

The blue sky is never more celestial to our eyes than when it is first seen here and there between the clouds at the end of a storm, — a sign of speedy fair weather. I saw clear blue patches for twenty minutes or more in the southwest before I could leave my covert, for still I saw successive fine showers falling between me and the thick glaucous white pine beneath.

I think that such a projection as this, or a cave, is the only effectual protection that nature affords us against the storm.

I sang "Tom Bowling" there in the midst of the rain, and the dampness seemed to be favorable to my voice.[1] There was a slight rainbow on my way home. Met Conant riding home, who had been caught in town and detained, though he had an umbrella. Already a spider or other insect had drawn together the just expanded leaves of a hickory before my door with its web within them, making a close tent. This twig extended under my rocky roof and was quite dry. Probably a portion of the Cliff, being undermined by rain, had anciently fallen out and left this rocky roof above.

May 31. P. M. — To Gowing's Swamp and to *Pinus resinosa*.

In the ditches in Moore's Swamp on the new Bedford

[1] [This was Thoreau's favorite song. See Sanborn, pp. 268, 269, 272, especially the quotation from Mr. Ricketson.]

road, the myriads of pollywogs, now three quarters of an inch long, crowding close to the edge, make a continuous black edging to the pool a foot wide. I see where thousands have been left high and dry and are now trodden into the sand, yet preserving their forms, spotting it with black. The water looks too full of yellowish sediment to support them. That central meadow and pool in Gowing's Swamp is its very navel, *omphalos*, where the umbilical cord was cut that bound it to creation's womb. Methinks every swamp tends to have or suggests such an interior tender spot. The sphagnous crust that surrounds the pool is pliant and quaking, like the skin or muscles of the abdomen; you seem to be slumping into the very bowels of the swamp. Some seem to have been here to collect sphagnum, either for wells, or to wrap plants in. There grow the white spruce and the larch. The spruce cones, though now erect, at length turn down. The sterile flowers on lower twigs around stand up now three quarters of an inch long, open and reddish-brown. *Andromeda Polifolia*, much past its prime. I detect no hairy huckleberry. The *Vaccinium Oxycoccus* is almost in bloom! and has grown three inches; is much in advance of the common.

The *Pinus resinosa* not yet out; will be apparently with the *rigida*. It has no fertile flowers or cones. The sterile flower-buds are dark-purple, while those of the *rigida there* are light-green. The largest tree is about ten inches in diameter. It is distinguished, at a distance even, by its lighter-colored and smoother or flatter bark. It is also very straight and perpendicular, with its

branches in regular whorls, and its needles are very long.

Rhodora now in its prime.

I see in open land a hollow circle of *Lycopodium dendroideum*, ten feet in diameter; some of the inner portion is dead. This too, then, like the flowering fern, grows or spreads in circles. Also the cinnamon fern grows in circles.

See an ants' nest, just begun, which covers the grass with sand for more than ten feet in one direction and seven in the other and is thickly pierced with holes.

XI

JUNE, 1857

(ÆT. 39)

June 1. P. M. — To Hill.

The weather has been less reliable for a few weeks past than at any other season of the year. Though fair in the forenoon, it may rain in the afternoon, and the continuance of the showers surpasses all expectation. After several days of rain a fair day may succeed, and you close your eyes at night on a starlit sky, but you awake unexpectedly to a steady rain in the morning.

The morus at the Lee house is apparently the same with that at Howe's and Pratt's, and the berries are now three quarters of an inch long. I see no staminate blossoms. It must have been out several days. It is undoubtedly the *Morus rubra*, our only native one, for the *nigra* has lobed leaves and is a smaller tree, rare, and not quite hardy enough to do well in New England, they say.[1]

The second thorn on Hill will evidently open to-morrow. It is altogether smooth while the first has downy peduncles, and its sepals are about entire while those of the first are cut-fringed. That largest and earliest thorn is now in full bloom, and I notice that its

[1] I read in Michaux, June 12, that the sexes of the *rubra* are *usually* separate, and that the fruit of the black is three or four times as large as this.

bloom is much whiter at a little distance than that of an apple tree, which has a blue tinge (or, earlier, rosaceous). This thorn has pink anthers, seen close at hand. The leaves are very evenly distributed amid the bloom. I see a swamp white [oak] fully and abundantly out, apparently a day or two; so the chestnut oak (which begins to shed pollen in house June 2d; its young reddish leaves resemble the young *Q. Chinquapin*, and its bloom, and apparently it opens with it in similar places) may be put apparently with the white oak. But it grows in a rather late place.

P. arbutifolia var. *erythrocarpa* in house; perhaps a day or two earlier in some places.

A red-wing's nest, four eggs, low in a tuft of sedge in an open meadow. What Champollion can translate the hieroglyphics on these eggs? It is always writing of the same character, though much diversified. While the bird picks up the material and lays the egg, who determines the style of the marking? When you approach, away dashes the dark mother, betraying her nest, and then chatters her anxiety from a neighboring bush, where she is soon joined by the red-shouldered male, who comes scolding over your head, chattering and uttering a sharp *phe phee-e*.

I hear the note of a bobolink concealed in the top of an apple tree behind me. Though this bird's full strain is ordinarily somewhat trivial, this one appears to be meditating a strain as yet unheard in meadow or orchard. *Paulo majora canamus.* He is just touching the strings of his theorbo, his glassichord, his water organ, and one or two notes globe themselves and fall

in liquid bubbles from his teeming throat.[1] It is as if he touched his harp within a vase of liquid melody, and when he lifted it out, the notes fell like bubbles from the trembling strings. Methinks they are the most *liquidly* sweet and melodious sounds I ever heard. They are refreshing to my ear as the first distant tinkling and gurgling of a rill to a thirsty man. Oh, never advance farther in your art, never let us hear your full strain, sir. But away he launches, and the meadow is all bespattered with melody. His notes fall with the apple blossoms, in the orchard. The very divinest part of his strain dropping from his overflowing breast *singultim*, in globes of melody. It is the foretaste of such strains as never fell on mortal ears, to hear which we should rush to our doors and contribute all that we possess and are. Or it seemed as if in that vase full of melody some notes sphered themselves, and from time to time bubbled up to the surface and were with difficulty repressed.

June 2. Sterile buttonwood, not yet *generally*, but some apparently several days at least.

It was a portion of the natural surface of the earth itself which jutted out and became my roof the other day. How fit that Nature should thus shelter her own children! The first drops were dimpling the pond even as the fishes had done.

The grass is flaming up through the shallow water on the meadows.

It is very warm till 3 P. M., and then a washing breeze

[1] [Channing, p. 96.]

arises, and before night probably distant thundershowers have cooled the air, for after dark we see the flashes called heat lightning in the north, and hear the distant thunder. Geraniums bring thunder.

That bobolink's song affected me as if one were endeavoring to keep down globes of melody within a vase full of liquid, but some bubbled up irrepressible, — kept thrusting them down with a stick, but they slipped and came up one side.

A young sparrow already flies.

Drove this afternoon to Painted-Cup Meadow.

A tanager yesterday.

June 3. P. M. — To White Cedar Swamp.

Salix lucida out of bloom, but *S. nigra* still in bloom. I see a large branch of *S. lucida*, which has been broken off probably by the ice in the winter and come down from far up-stream and lodged, butt downward, amid some bushes, where it has put forth pink fibres from the butt end in the water, and is growing vigorously, though not rooted in the bottom. It is thus detained by a clump of bushes at high water, where it begins to sprout and send its pink fibres down to the mud, and finally the water, getting down to the summer level, leaves it rooted in the bank.

The first cratægus on Hill is in many instances done, while the second is not fairly or generally in bloom yet. The pitch pine at Hemlocks is in bloom. The sterile flowers are yellowish, while those of the *P. resinosa* are dark-purple. As usual, when I jar them the pollen rises in a little cloud about the pistillate flowers and the

tops of the twigs, there being a little wind. The bass at the Island will not bloom this year.[1] The racemed andromeda (*Leucothoë*) has been partly killed, — the extremities of the twigs, — so that its racemes are imperfect, the lower parts only green. It is not quite out; probably is later for this injury.

The ground of the cedar swamp, where it has been burnt over and sprouts, etc., have sprung up again, is covered with the *Marchantia polymorpha*. Now shows its starlike or umbrella-shaped fertile flowers and its shield-shaped sterile ones. It is a very rank and wild-looking vegetation, forming the cuticle of the swamp's foundation.

I feel the suckers' nests with my paddle, but do not see them on account of the depth of the river. Many small devil's-needles, like shad-flies, in bushes.

Early potatoes are being hoed. The gardener is killing the piper grass.

I have several friends and acquaintances who are very good companions in the house or for an afternoon walk, but whom I cannot make up my mind to make a longer excursion with; for I discover, all at once, that they are too gentlemanly in manners, dress, and all their habits. I see in my mind's eye that they wear black coats, considerable starched linen, glossy hats and shoes, and it is out of the question. It is a great disadvantage for a traveller to be a gentleman of this kind; he is so ill-treated, only a prey to landlords. It would be too much of a circumstance to enter a strange town or house with such a companion. You could not

[1] ?

travel incognito; you might get into the papers. You should travel as a common man. If such a one were to set out to make a walking-journey, he would betray himself at every step. Every one would see that he was trying an experiment, as plainly as they see that a lame man is lame by his limping. The natives would bow to him, other gentlemen would invite him to ride, conductors would warn him that this was the second-class car, and many would take him for a clergyman; and so he would be continually pestered and balked and run upon. You would not see the natives at all. Instead of going in quietly at the back door and sitting by the kitchen fire, you would be shown into a cold parlor, there to confront a fireboard, and excite a commotion in a whole family. The women would scatter at your approach, and their husbands and sons would go right up to hunt up their black coats, — for they all have them; they are as cheap as dirt. You would go trailing your limbs along the highways, mere bait for corpulent innholders, as a pickerel's [*sic*] leg is trolled along a stream, and your part of the profits would be the frog's. No, you must be a common man, or at least travel as one, and then nobody will know that you are there or have been there. I would not undertake a simple pedestrian excursion with one of these, because to enter a village, or a hotel, or a private house, with such a one, would be too great a circumstance, would create too great a stir. You could only go half as far with the same means, for the price of board and lodgings would rise everywhere; so much you have to pay for wearing that kind of coat. Not that the difference is in

the coat at all, for the character of the scurf is determined by that of the true liber beneath. Innkeepers, stablers, conductors, clergymen, know a true wayfaring man at first sight and let him alone. It is of no use to shove your gaiter shoes a mile further than usual. Sometimes it is mere shiftlessness or want of originality, — the clothes wear them; sometimes it is egotism, that cannot afford to be treated like a common man, — they wear the clothes. They wish to be at least fully appreciated by every stage-driver and schoolboy. They would like well enough to see a new place, perhaps, but then they would like to be regarded as important public personages. They would consider it a misfortune if their names were left out of the published list of passengers because they came in the steerage, — an obscurity from which they might never emerge.

June 4. P. M. — To Bare Hill.

The early potentilla is now erect in the June grass. *Salix tristis* is going to seed, showing some cotton; also some *S. rostrata*. I am surprised to see some kind of fish dart away in Collier's veronica ditch, for it about dries up and has no outlet.

I observed yesterday, the first time this year, the lint on the smooth surface of the Assabet at the Hemlocks, giving the water a stagnant look. It is an agreeable phenomenon to me, as connected with the season and suggesting warm weather. I suppose it to be the down from the new leaves which so rapidly become smooth. There *may be* a *little* pitch pine pollen with it now. The current is hardly enough to make a clear streak

in it here and there. The stagnant-looking surface, where the water slowly circles round in that great eddy, has the appearance of having been dusted over. This lint now covers my clothes as I go through the sprout-lands, but it gets off remarkably before long. Each under side of a leaf you strike leaves the mark of its lint on your clothes, but it is clean dirt and soon wears off.

One thing that chiefly distinguishes this season from three weeks ago is that fine serene undertone or earth-song as we go by sunny banks and hillsides, the creak of crickets, which affects our thoughts so favorably, imparting its own serenity. It is time now to bring our philosophy out of doors. Our thoughts pillow themselves unconsciously in the troughs of this serene, rippling sea of sound. Now first we begin to be peripatetics. No longer our ears come in contact with the bold echoing earth, but everywhere recline on the spring cushion of a cricket's chirp. These rills that ripple from every hillside become at length a universal sea of sound, nourishing our ears when we are most unconscious.

In that first apple tree at Wyman's an apparent hairy woodpecker's nest (from the size of the bird), about ten feet from ground. The bird darts away with a shrill, loud chirping of alarm, incessantly repeated, long before I get there, and keeps it up as long as I stay in the neighborhood. The young keep up an incessant fine, breathing peep which can be heard across the road and is much increased when they hear you approach the hole, they evidently expecting the old bird.

I perceive no offensive odor. I saw the bird fly out of this hole, May 1st, and probably the eggs were laid about that time. *Vide* it next year.

In the high pasture behind Jacob Baker's, soon after coming out of the wood, I scare up a bay-wing. She runs several rods close to the ground through the thin grass, and then lurks behind tussocks, etc. The nest has four eggs, dull pinkish-white with brown spots; nest low in ground, of stubble lined with white horse-hair.

Carya glabra, apparently a day at least.

Oldenlandia on Bare Hill, along above wall opposite the oak, a rod or more off and westerly. Apparently several days at least, but it appears not to do well. It has a dry, tufted look, somewhat like young savory-leaved aster, on the bare rocky hill and in the clear spaces between the huckleberry bushes. Reminds me of a heath. Does not blossom so full as once I saw it. Arethusa. Crimson fungus (?) on black birch leaves, as if bespattered with blood.

June 5. P. M. — To Gowing's Swamp and Poplar Hill.

The shad-flies were very abundant probably last evening about the house, for this morning they are seen filling and making black every cobweb on the side of the house, blinds, etc. All freshly painted surfaces are covered with them. The surface of pools and ditches also is remarkably thick with them. The living ones are on the bushes which I pluck, far from any water.

I find one *Vaccinium Oxycoccus* open. The petals

are not white like the common, but pink like the bud. That low reedy sedge about the edge of the central pool in the swamp is just out of bloom and shows the seeds.[1]

I see a great many tortoises in that pool, showing their heads and backs above water and pursuing each other about the pool. It is evidently their copulating-season. Their shells are yellow-spotted, and their throats are of a reddish yellow (?). Are they the *Emys guttata?*[2] It is a wonder how they made their way to this water through so many twiggy bushes and over so many tussocks. How should they know of such a wild water? To this wild water, then, the tortoises which inhabit the swamps resort in their breeding-season, and are there undisturbed. You would think it almost the labor of a lifetime for a tortoise to make its way from the surrounding shrubbery to this water, and how do they know that there is water here?

The larch cones are still very beautiful against the light, but some cones, I perceive, are merely green. Some apparent beach plum (?) almost completely out of bloom, ten to twelve feet high, along the wall behind Adolphus Clark's. This is the largest I know of. Lambkill. The mocker-nuts on Mrs. Ripley's hill apparently a day or more. Some red maples are much more fertile than others. Their keys are now very conspicuous. But such trees have comparatively few leaves and have grown but little as yet.

[1] Scheuchzeria.

[2] Probably, for I have found two on the sphagnum close by it since. *Vide* 1860, May or June.

At evening, paddle up Assabet. There are many ephemeræ in the air; but it is cool, and their great flight is not yet. Pincushion gall on oak.

I am interested in each contemporary plant in my vicinity, and have attained to a certain acquaintance with the larger ones. They are cohabitants with me of this part of the planet, and they bear familiar names. Yet how essentially wild they are! as wild, really, as those strange fossil plants whose impressions I see on my coal. Yet I can imagine that some race gathered those too with as much admiration, and knew them as intimately as I do these, that even they served for a language of the sentiments. Stigmariæ stood for a human sentiment in that race's flower language. Chickweed, or a pine tree, is but little less wild. I assume to be acquainted with these, but what ages between me and the tree whose shade I enjoy! It is as if it stood substantially in a remote geological period.

June 6. 8 A. M. — To Lee's Cliff by river.

Salix pedicellaris off Holden's has been out of bloom several days at least. So it is earlier to begin and to end than *our S. lucida*.

This is June, the month of grass and leaves. The deciduous trees are investing the evergreens and revealing how dark they are. Already the aspens are trembling again, and a new summer is offered me. I feel a little fluttered in my thoughts, as if I might be too late. Each season is but an infinitesimal point. It no sooner comes than it is gone. It has no duration. It simply gives a tone and hue to my thought. Each annual

phenomenon is a reminiscence and prompting. Our thoughts and sentiments answer to the revolutions of the seasons, as two cog-wheels fit into each other. We are conversant with only one point of contact at a time, from which we receive a prompting and impulse and instantly pass to a new season or point of contact. A year is made up of a certain series and number of sensations and thoughts which have their language in nature. Now I am ice, now I am sorrel. Each experience reduces itself to a mood of the mind. I see a man grafting, for instance. What this imports chiefly is not apples to the owner or bread to the grafter, but a certain mood or train of thought to my mind. That is what this grafting is to me. Whether it is anything at all, even apples or bread, to anybody else, I cannot swear, for it would be worse than swearing *through glass*. For I only see those other facts as through a glass darkly.

Cratægus Crus-Galli, maybe a day. Early iris. *Viburnum Lentago*, a day or more. Krigias, with their somewhat orange yellow, spot the dry hills all the forenoon and are very common, but as they are closed in the afternoon, they are but rarely noticed by walkers. The long mocker-nut on Conantum not yet out, and the second, or round, one will be yet later. Its catkins are more grayish.

I see many great devil's-needles in an open wood, — and for a day or two, — stationary on twigs, etc., standing out more or less horizontally like thorns, holding by their legs and heads (?). They do not incline to move when touched, and their eyes look whitish and

opaque, as if they were blind. They were evidently just escaped from the slough. I often see the slough on plants and, I think, the pupa in the water, as at Callitriche Pool.

As I sit on Lee's Cliff, I see a pe-pe on the topmost dead branch of a hickory eight or ten rods off. Regularly, at short intervals, it utters its monotonous note like *till-till-till*, or *pe-pe-pe*. Looking round for its prey and occasionally changing its perch, it every now and then darts off (phœbe-like), even five or six rods, toward the earth to catch an insect, and then returns to its favorite perch. If I lose it for a moment, I soon see it settling on the dead twigs again and hear its *till, till, till*. It appears through the glass mouse-colored above and head (which is perhaps darker), white throat, and narrow white beneath, with no white on tail.

There is a thorn now in its prime, *i. e.* near the beaked hazel, Conantum, with leaves more wedge-shaped at base than the *Cratægus coccinea;* apparently a variety of it, between that and *Crus-Galli*. (In press.)

A kingbird's nest, with two of its large handsome eggs, very loosely set over the fork of a horizontal willow by river, with dried everlasting of last year, as usual, just below Garfield's boat. Another in black willow south of long cove (east side, north of Hubbard's Grove) and another north of said cove. A brown thrasher's nest, with two eggs, on ground, near lower lentago wall and toward Bittern Cliff. The *Ranunculus Purshii* is in some places abundantly out now and quite showy. It must be our largest ranunculus (flower).

June 7. *Sunday.* P. M. — To river and Ponkawtasset with M. Pratt.

Now I notice many bubbles left on the water in my wake, as if it were more sluggish or had more viscidity than earlier. Far behind me they rest without bursting. Pratt has got the *Calla palustris*, in prime, — some was withering, so it may have been out ten days,[1] — from the bog near Bateman's Pond; also *Oxalis violacea*, which he says began about last Sunday, or May 31st, larger and handsomer than the yellow, though it blossoms but sparingly. Red huckleberry about same time. It is sticky like the black. His geranium from Fitzwilliam is well in bloom. It seems to be herb-robert, but without any offensive odor ! (?)

A small elm in front of Pratt's which he says three years ago had flowers in flat cymes, like a cornel! ![2] I have pressed some leaves.

At the cross-wall below N. Hunt's, some way from road, the red cohush, one plant only in flower, the rest going to seed. Probably, therefore, with the white. It has slender pedicels and petals shorter than the white. Garlic grows there, not yet out. *Rubus triflorus* still in bloom there.

At the base of some hellebore, in a tuft a little from under the east edge of an apple tree, below violet wood-sorrel, a nest well made outside of leaves, then grass, lined with fine grass, very deep and narrow, with thick sides, with four small somewhat cream-colored eggs with small brown and some black spots chiefly toward

[1] Or more, for it is past prime the 9th.

[2] He must be mistaken.

larger end. The bird, which flew off quickly, made me think of a wren and of a Maryland yellow-throat, though I saw no yellow.[1]

June 8. P. M. — To Saw Mill Brook.

White actæa done there. There are two good-sized black walnuts at Cyrus Smith's, by wall, out apparently a day. When I split the twigs they seemed hollowed by a worm or disease, the pith being (as is said of the butternut also) in plates. The fertile flower is probably not obvious yet. That of the butternut is now very distinct with its crimson stigmas.

Mother was saying to-day that she bought no new clothes for John until he went away into a store, but made them of his father's old clothes, which made me say that country boys could get enough cloth for their clothes by robbing the scarecrows. So little it need cost to live.

June 9. A large fog. *Celastrus scandens*, maybe a day. Triosteum, apparently several days (not at all June 1st).

Both kinds of sap, yellow birch and black, are now, in some bottles, quite aromatic and alike; but this year, methinks, it has a more *swampy* taste and musty, and most of the bottles are merely sour.

P. M. — To Violet Sorrel and Calla Swamp.

A peetweet's nest near wall by Shattuck's barn,

[1] It was a Maryland yellow-throat. Egg fresh. She is very shy and will not return to nest while you wait, but keeps up a very faint chip in the bushes or grass at some distance.

Merrick's pasture, at base of a dock; four eggs just on the point of being hatched. A regular nest of weak stubble set in ground.

In the sprout-land beyond the red huckleberry, an indigo-bird, which *chips* about me as if it had a nest there. This is a splendid and marked bird, high-colored as is the tanager, looking strange in this latitude. Glowing indigo. It flits from top of one bush to another, chirping as if anxious. Wilson says it sings, not like most other birds in the morning and evening chiefly, but also in the middle of the day. In this I notice it is like the tanager, the other fiery-plumaged bird. They seem to love the heat. It probably had its nest in one of those bushes.

The calla is generally past prime and going to seed.

I had said to Pratt, "It will be worth the while to look for other rare plants in Calla Swamp, for I have observed that where one rare plant grows there will commonly be others." Carrying out this design, this afternoon, I had not taken three steps into the swamp barelegged before I found the *Naumbergia thyrsiflora* in sphagnum and water, which I had not seen growing before. (Channing brought one to me from Hubbard's Great Meadow once.) It is hardly beginning yet. (In prime June 24th. *Vide* June 24th.)

The water in this Calla Swamp feels cold to my feet, and perhaps this is a peculiarity of it; on the north side a hill.

When I was at the yellow-throat's nest (as above) I heard that very loud sharp *pheet pheet* of a woodchuck (?) or rabbit which I have often heard before.

The hellebore was very much eaten off about the wall whence it proceeded. It was kept up from time to time while I stayed.

June 10. At R. W. E.'s a viburnum, apparently *nudum* var. *cassinoides* (?) (*pyrifolium* Pursh), four or five days at least. (*Vide* in press.) It agrees with Bigelow's account, except that the leaves are decidedly serrate and the calyx-segments not acute. Has but a very slight tendency to thorns!! Twigs of this year red. The cymes are nearly sessile; petioles, etc., *very little* rusty-dotted. Compare it with *prunifolium*, and see fruit. It stands in a row with E.'s pear trees and has been mistaken for one, which, when not in flower, it very much resembles. Probably came from Watson's with them. (On the 13th I see apparently the same at Watson's, Plymouth, which he calls, and imported as, *V. prunifolium!*)

P. M. — To White Cedar Swamp.

A wood tortoise making a hole for her eggs just like a picta's hole. The *Leucothoë racemosa*, not yet generally out, but a little (it being mostly killed) a day or two.

In Julius Smith's yard, a striped snake (so called) was running about this forenoon, and in the afternoon it was found to have shed its slough, leaving it halfway out a hole, which probably it used to confine it in. It was about in its new skin. Many creatures — devil's-needles, etc., etc. — cast their sloughs now. Can't I?

Farmer tells me to-day that he has seen a regular barn swallow with forked tail about his barn, which was *black*,

not rufous; also of an owl's nest in a pine, the young probably two or three weeks old. *Vide* June 24th.

June 12. *Friday.* 8.30 A. M. — Set out for CAPE COD.

EGGS.—

At Natural History Rooms.—

The egg found on ground in R. W. E.'s garden some weeks since cannot be the bobolink's, for that is about as big as a bay-wing's but more slender, dusky-white, with numerous brown and black blotches. The egg of the *Turdus solitarius* is lettered "*Swamp Robin.*" Is this what they so call at New Bedford? The wood thrush's is a slender egg, a little longer than a catbird's and uniform greenish-blue. The yellow-shouldered sparrow's egg is size of Maryland yellow-throat's, white with brown spots, sometimes in a ring at the larger end. The Savannah sparrow's is about the same size, dirty-white with thick brown blotches. I find that the egg Farmer gave me for the "chicklisee's" is enough like the yellow-throat's to be it. Can he be thinking of the note, *whittichee?* Or is it the yellow-shouldered sparrow's egg? The egg of the hermit thrush[1] is about as big as that of Wilson's thrush, but darker green.

Some edible swallows' (?) nests, on a stick, side by side, shallow and small and shaped like oyster-shells, light-colored, but yet placed somewhat like the chimney swallows'.

Among the frogs in alcohol I notice the *Scaphiopus solitarius,* Cambridge!!

[1] Which variety?

Michaux says that mocker-nuts are of various sizes and forms, some round, some oblong. So I have found them. He also says that "the red-flowering maple [*Acer rubrum*][1] is the earliest tree whose bloom announces the return of Spring." This is a mistake, the white maple being much earlier.

I have not found the white spruce yet.

P. M. — At Watson's, Plymouth.

W. has several varieties of the English hawthorn (*oxyacantha*), pink and rose-colored, double and single, and very handsome now.

His English oak is almost entirely out of bloom, though I got some flowers. The biggest, which was set out in '49, is about thirty feet high, and, as I measured, just twenty inches in circumference at four inches from the ground. A very rapid growth.

I obtained there specimens of the plum-leaved willow, come well ditto, — because it comes on fast, — and *Salix rosmarinifolia*. Only some lingering bloom with the last.

He has the foreign *Betula alba* (much like our *populifolia*), its bark loosened up like our *papyracea*, but not so white; and what was sent him for *populifolia*, much like our *red birch*, the bark much like that of *alba* loosened up, but more reddish, the limbs red, leaves like a balm-of-Gilead somewhat, large (*vide* press). The *papyracea* leaves are unusually wedge-shaped at base, methinks.

The moosewood is chiefly fruiting, but some still

[1] [The brackets are Thoreau's.]

in bloom. *Cornus sanguinea*, in its prime. Its bark is *bright-red* and greenish. That of *C. sericea* (not well named) is dark-purplish. The Oriental is later to bloom than ours or else smaller-fruited.

The American mountain-ash not yet out (Cheney's in Concord, a day or two, June 25th). Nuttall says its leaves are at last very smooth. I have hitherto observed the *Pyrus aucuparia*, or European, at Prichard's, Whiting's, etc.

W. has the *Cratægus prunifolius*, with its thorns (*vide* herbarium); *Castanea vesca*, Spanish chestnut, of which ours is made a variety merely; *Populus monilifera*, as he calls it, and another very like it.

Bayberry well out. *Senecio vulgaris* a common weed, apparently in prime. Honkenya and beach pea well out on Plymouth beach.

W. has a very flourishing and large white maple of his setting, and they stand in Plymouth streets also, very pretty.

June 13. I see large mosses on the beach, crimson and lighter, already spread on the sand. See children going a-flagging and returning with large bundles, for the sake of the inmost tender blade. They go miles for them here.

June 14. *Sunday*. 7 A. M. — To Clark's Island.

B. M. Watson tells me that he learns from pretty good authority that Webster once saw the sea-serpent. It seems it was first seen, in the bay between Manomet and Plymouth Beach, by a perfectly relia-

ble witness (many years ago), who was accustomed to look out on the sea with his glass every morning the first thing as regularly as he ate his breakfast. One morning he saw this monster, with a head somewhat like a horse's raised some six feet above the water, and his body the size of a cask trailing behind. He was careering over the bay, chasing the mackerel, which ran ashore in their fright and were washed up and died in great numbers. The story is that Webster had appointed to meet some Plymouth gentlemen at Manomet and spend the day fishing with them. After the fishing was [over], he set out to return to Duxbury in his sailboat with Peterson, as he had come, and on the way they saw the sea-serpent, which answered to the common account of this creature. It passed directly across their bows only six or seven rods off and then disappeared. On the sail homeward, Webster having had time to reflect on what had occurred, at length said to Peterson, "For God's sake, never say a word about this to any one, for if it should be known that I have seen the sea-serpent, I should never hear the last of it, but wherever I went should have to tell the story to every one I met." So it has not leaked out till now.

Watson tells me (and Ed. Watson confirms it, his father having probably been of the party) that many years ago a party of Plymouth gentlemen rode round by the shore to the Gurnet and there had a high time. When they set out to return they left one of their number, a General Winslow, asleep, and as they rode along homeward, amused themselves with conjecturing what

he would think when he waked up and found himself alone. When at length he awoke, he comprehended his situation at once, and, being somewhat excited by the wine he had drunk, he mounted his horse and rode along the shore to Saquish Head in the opposite direction. From here to the end of Plymouth Beach is about a mile and a quarter, but, it being low tide, he waded his horse as far as the beacon north of the channel, at the entrance to Plymouth Harbor, about three quarters of a mile, and then boldly swam him across to the end of Plymouth Beach, about half a mile further, notwithstanding a strong current, and, having landed safely, he whipped up and soon reached the town, having come only about eight miles, and had ample time to warm and dry himself at the tavern before his companions, who had at least twenty miles to ride about through Marshfield and Duxbury. And when they found him sitting by the tavern fire, they at first thought it was his ghost.

Mr. Ed. Watson's brother (half?), the one who used to live in his schooner, told me that he saw (I suppose not long before) a stream of what they call "kelp flies," supposed to be generated by the rotting kelp, flying along just under the bank, on the shore in Duxbury, some ten feet wide by six deep and of indefinite length, — for he did not know how long they would be passing, — and flying as close as they could conveniently. Ed. Watson had no doubt of it. They also have what they call menhaden flies. This was an offset to my account of the ephemeræ.

Mr. Albert Watson's sons are engaged in lobster-

catching. One will get two hundred in a day. I was surprised to hear that their lobster-traps were made in Vermont, costing something over a dollar apiece, — much timber, — but it seems they can be made cheaper there and sent down by railroad. They use sculpins, perch, etc., etc., for bait, catching it in a circular net with an iron rim. There were a couple of quarts of pine plugs or wedges in a boat, with which to plug the claws of the lobsters to prevent their fighting and tearing each other's claws off in the cars. There are large crates of latticework, six or eight feet square, sunk to a level with the water, in which they keep them fresh. They get three cents apiece for them, not boiled.

Saw them swim three horses across from Saquish Head to the island, a quarter of a mile or more. One rows a small boat while a man holds the bridle. At first the horses swam faster than the man could row, but soon they were somewhat drawn after the boat. They have sometimes driven a whole drove of cattle over at once.

Saw an abundance of horseshoe crabs on the Saquish shore, generally coupled, the rearmost or male (if that is he with two club feet) always the smaller. Often there were three or even four in a string, all moving about close to the shore, which apparently they affect. The pigs get a little nutriment out of them.

Looking from the island, the water is a light green over a shoal.

In a little red cedar grove, of young trees surrounding an old trunk, the only indigenous wood on the island, some three rods by two, and fifteen feet high,

I counted thirty-five crow blackbirds' nests, sometimes two or three near together in a tree, the young fluttering about and some dead beneath. The old in numbers were meanwhile coarsely chattering over our heads. The nests appeared to be made partly of the grassy seaweed.

E. Watson says that he saw a hen catch and devour a mouse, rather young, that was running across his barn floor.

In the shade of the orchard there, amid seaweed, a variety of whiteweed with more entire leaves, etc., and apparently without rays. Is it the Connecticut variety, with short rays?

Mr. Watson describes a sea turtle, as big as a mud turtle, found on the shore once. It had a large dent in its back, in which you [could] lay your hand, — a wound.

Evening. — At B. M. Watson's again. Hear a *new song*, very sweet and clear from what at first sounded like a golden robin, then a purple finch. It was not the first.

B. M. Watson speaks of an old lady named Cotton, now alive and over ninety, who is the Plymouth oracle. He says that his father-in-law Russell (whom I saw and who told me this once) knew a Cobb, who had seen Peregrine White.

Watson had a colt born about ten or eleven the last evening. I went out to see it early this morning, as it lay in the cold pasture. It got up alarmed and trotted about on its long large legs, and even nibbled a little grass, and behaved altogether as if it had been an in-

habitant of this planet for some years at least. They are as precocious as young partridges. It ran about most of the day in the pasture with its mother. Watson was surprised to see it so much larger than the night before. Probably they expand at once on coming to the light and air, like a butterfly that has just come out of its chrysalis.

June 15. *Monday*. A. M. — Walked to James Spooner's farm in a valley amid the woods; also to a swamp where white cedars once grew, not far behind the town, and now full of their buried trunks, though I hear of no tradition of trees there. In digging mud there recently, hog's bristles were found three or four feet deep. Watson told me of such places in Plymouth as "Small Gains" and "Shall I go naked?"

2 P. M. — Ride to Manomet with Watson and wife, through Manomet Ponds village, about eight miles. At the mouth of Eel River, the marsh vetchling (*Lathyrus palustris*), apparently in prime, some done. The curve of the shore on the east of Plymouth Beach is said to resemble the Bay of Naples. Manomet was quite a hill, over which the road ran in the woods. We struck the shore near Holmes's Hotel about half a mile north of Manomet Point.

There I shouldered my pack and took leave of my friends, — who thought it a dreary place to leave me, — and my journey along the shore was begun. Following the rocky shore round the point, I went considerably round without knowing it. Found there many of

the small shells that R. W. E. brought from Pigeon Cove. Having got round the point, I found a smooth sandy shore with pretty high sand-banks, like the back side of the Cape (though less). The vegetation on the top of the bank, too, was similar. I could see scattered small houses on the road a little inland. The *Hudsonia tomentosa* was apparently in prime there. Passed a few fishers' boats on the sand, with a long rope and anchor carried high up, and one or two places where they land wood. Some three miles below Manomet, there appeared another blunt cape in front, which I avoided by going inland, falling into a small road near the coast, on which were two or three houses. Within a mile I crossed the stream or brook laid down on the map, by a rail, in low woods, leaving a wooded hill between me and the shore, then went along the edge of a swamp. It was pleasant walking thus at 5 P. M. by solitary sandy paths, through commonly low dry woods of oak or pine, through glistening oak woods (their fresh leaves in the June air), where the yellow-throat (or black-throat?[1]) was heard and the wood thrush sang, and, as I passed a swamp, a bittern boomed. As I stood quite near, I heard distinctly two or three dry, hard sucks, as if the bird were drawing up water from the swamp, and then the sounds usually heard, as if ejecting it. From time to time passed a yellow-spot or a painted turtle in the path, for now is their laying-season. One of the former was laying. We had before been obliged to stop our horse for fear of running over one in the rut. Now is the time that they are killed in

[1] [That is, black-throated bunting. See June 16.]

the ruts all the country over. They are caught in them, the clumsy fellows, as in a trap. Now the tortoises are met with in sandy woods and, delaying, are run over in the ruts.

One old man directed me on my way through the "plewed" land. Was amused at the simple and obliging but evidently despairing way in which a man at the last house endeavored to direct me further on my way by cart-paths through the woods, he evidently not having any faith that I could keep the route, but, getting the general course by compass, I did.

Having left Ship's Pond and Centre Hill Pond and a cedar swamp on my left, I at length reached one Harlow's, to whom I was recommended, but his neighbors said that "he lived *alone* like a beast" there ten years. I put up at Samuel Ellis's, just beyond the Salt Pond near by, having walked six or seven miles from Manomet through a singularly out-of-the-way region, of which you wonder if it is ever represented in the legislature.

Mrs. Ellis agreed to take me in, though they had already supped and she was unusually tired, it being washing-day. They were accustomed to put up peddlers from time to time, and had some pies just baked for such an emergency. At first took me for a peddler and asked what I carried in my bag. I was interested in a young peddler who soon after arrived and put up with his horse and cart, a simple and well-behaved boy of sixteen or seventeen only, peddling cutlery, who said that he started from Conway in this State. In answer to my question how he liked ped-

dling, he said that he liked it on some accounts, it enabled him to see the world. I thought him an unusually good specimen of Young America. He found cutlery not good wares for that region; could do better where he came from, and was on his way to Boston for dry goods. Arranged to pay for his keeping partly in kind.

I saw menhaden skipping in the pond as I came along, it being connected with the sea.

Ellis, an oldish man, said that lobsters were plentier than they used to be, that one sometimes got three hundred and upward in a day, and he thought the reason was that they spawned in the cars and so the young were protected from fishes that prey on them. He told me of a man whom he had known, who once leaped upon a blackfish that had run or been driven ashore at the head of Buzzard's Bay, where they are very rare, in order to dispatch him, and as he was making a hole in the side of his head, he looked up and found himself a quarter of a mile from land, not having noticed any motion. The fish blowed blood with such force that it cut like a knife, and he saw his shirt-sleeve which appeared as if riddled with shot. He managed with his knife to head him toward shore again, and there landed. Told of finding a mud turtle so large that he walked with him standing on his back, though the turtle did not fairly stand up. He had killed a deer close by his house within two or three years. Hunters were then after it. Hearing the noise, he rushed into his house, seized his gun and fired hastily and carelessly, so as to mortally wound his dog (as well as the deer),

which he "would not have taken five dollars for!!" and had to dispatch at last. His wife and child also were nearly within range.

Speaking of the cold of last winter, he said he had no glass, but he knew it was extremely cold by seeing so great a fog on the sea in the morning as never before, which lasted unusually long. Said they fished on a shoal lying northeast, where there were seventeen fathoms of water, but when there was a fog on it, the fishes were gone, and he reckoned that the cold struck through.

Ellis told of a Boston man who thought he could catch some large trout in his brook with his fine tackling, but, as E. foretold, it broke, and the man offered five dollars apiece for the trout delivered in Boston, whether fresh or not. E. caught them soon after and sent them to Boston by water, but they, being spoiled by delay, were never delivered.

I heard him praying after I went to bed, and at breakfast the next morning —

(*June* 16) he gave thanks that we "of all the pale-faces were preserved alive." He was probably a Methodist. But the worst of it is that these evidences of "religion" are no evidence to the traveller of hospitality or generosity. Though he hears the sound of family prayer and sees sanctified faces and a greasy Bible or prayer-book, he feels not the less that he is in the hands of the Philistines, and perceives not the less the greasy and musty scent of a household whose single purpose is to scrape more pennies together, when it has already

more than enough for *its uses*, and it is to be preserved and abetted in this enterprise that they pray. What's the use of ushering the day with prayer, if it is thus consecrated to turning a few more pennies merely? All genuine goodness is original and as free from cant and tradition as the air. It is heathen in its liberality and independence on tradition. The accepted or established church is in alliance with the graveyards.

7 A. M. — I go along the sandy road through a region of small hills about half a mile from the sea, between slight gray fences, either post and rail, or slanting rails, a foot apart, resting on two crossed stakes, the rails of unequal length, looking agreeably loose and irregular.

Within half a mile I come to the house of an Indian, a gray one-storied cottage, and there were two or three more beyond. They were just *beginning to build a meeting-house to-day!* Mrs. Ellis had told me that they were worthy people, especially such a family, that were members of the church, and the others were decent people, though they were not "professors of religion," — as if they were consequently less trustworthy. Ellis thought that if they should get angry with you they would n't make anything of taking your life. He had seen it in their eyes. The usual suspicion. I asked the way of an Indian whom I met in the road, a respectable-looking young man not darker than a sunburnt white man, with black eyes and the usual straight black hair of his race. He was apparently of mixed race, however. When I observed to him that he

was one of the aboriginal stock, he answered, "I suppose so." We could see even to Sandwich Meeting-house as we stood in the road, and he showed me where to turn up from the shore to go to Scusset.

I turned off to the seashore at his house, going down through shrubbery enlivened by the strain of the yellow-throat (or black-throat bunting?). The seringo and bay-wing were also very common near the sea to-day and yesterday.

The shore between Manomet and Sandwich has in it two or three rocky capes, which interrupt the view along it, but are not very obvious on the map, between which are successive curving sandy beaches, Bays of Naples of the approved pattern. Swallows have their nests in the high bank from time to time, as at Cape Cod. Crows are seen lazily flapping away from the shore on your approach. Even a robin was seeking its food there.

The piping plover, as it runs half invisible on the sand before you, utters a shrill peep on an elevated key (different birds on different keys), as if to indicate its locality from time to time to its kind, or it utters a succession of short notes as it flies low over the sand or water. Ever and anon stands still tremblingly, or teeteringly, wagtail-like, turning this way and that.

Now and then a rock or two occurs on the sandy shore left by the undermining of the bank, even as on our Assabet, and I used one to-day (as yesterday) in my bathing.

From time to time, summer and winter and far inland, I call to mind that peculiar prolonged cry of the

upland plover on the bare heaths of Truro in July, heard from sea to sea, though you cannot guess how far the bird may be, as if it were a characteristic sound of the Cape.

In a genuine Cape Cod road you see simple dents in the sand, but cannot tell by what kind of foot they were made, the sand is so light and flowing.

The whole length of the Cape the beach-flea is skipping and the plover piping.

Where I turned up to go to Scusset village I saw some handsome patches of *Hudsonia tomentosa* (not yet had seen the *ericoides*), its fine bright-yellow flowers open chiefly about the edges of the hemispherical mounds.

About 11 A. M. take the cars from Scusset to Sandwich. See in the marshes by the railroad the *Potentilla anserina*, now apparently in prime, like a buttercup.

Stopped on the northwest edge of Yarmouth and inquired of the ticket-master the way to Friends Village in the southeast part of the town. He never heard of it. A stage-driver said it was five miles, and both directed me first northerly a quarter of a mile to the main street and then down that easterly some two miles before I turned off; and when I declared it must be nearer to go across lots, the driver said he would rather go round than get over the fences. Thus it is commonly; the landlords and stage-drivers are bent on making you walk the whole length of their main street first, wherever you are going. They know no road but such as is fit for a coach and four. I looked despairingly at this straggling village whose street I must run the gantlet

of, — so much time and distance lost. Nevertheless, I turned off earlier than they directed, and found that, as usual, I might have taken a shorter route across the fields and avoided the town altogether.

With my chart and compass I can generally find a shorter way than the inhabitants can tell me. I stop at a depot a little one side of a village and ask the way to some place I am bound to. The landlords and stage-drivers would fain persuade me to go first down on to the main street and follow that a piece; and when I show them a shorter way on the map, which leaves their village on one side, they shrug their shoulders, and say they would rather go round than get over the fences. I have found the compass and chart safer guides than the inhabitants, though the latter universally abuse the maps. I do not love to go through a village street any more than a cottage yard. I feel that I am there only by sufferance; but I love to go by the villages by my own road, seeing them from one side, as I do theoretically. When I go through a village, my legs ache at the prospect of the hard gravelled walk. I go by the tavern with its porch full of gazers, and meet a miss taking a walk or the doctor in his sulky, and for half an hour I feel as strange as if I were in a town in China; but soon I am at home in the wide world again, and my feet rebound from the yielding turf.

I followed a retired road across the Cape diagonally some five miles to Friends Village, the southeast part of the town, on Bass River, over at first bare upland with pine plantations, gradually at last rising a low but very broad and flat-backed hill (German's?) in the

woods. The pine and oak woods were quite extensive, but the trees small. See the *Hudsonia ericoides*, with a *peduncle*. The road ran directly through woods the last half the way.

Passed Long Pond just before reaching Friends Village. Passed through the latter and crossed Bass River by a toll-bridge, and so on through Crowell Village, Grand Cove, to Isaiah Baker's in West Harwich, some eight miles from Yarmouth Depot.

Just after crossing Bass River, plucked a plant in the marsh by the roadside like (if not) mullein pink. At Swan Pond River in Dennis, where they were just completing a new bridge, plucked the *Potentilla anserina*, now apparently in prime, with a handsome leaf, silvery beneath, in the marsh.

From near Long Pond, Friends Village, thus far, and also the two miles further that I walked due east the next day, or for five miles at least, it was a continuous street, without a distinct village, the houses but a few rods apart all the way on each side. A sandy road, small houses, with small pine and oak wood close bordering the road, making the soil appear more fertile than in reality it is. As in Canada along the St. Lawrence, you never got out of the village, only came to a meeting-house now and then. And they told me there was another similar street parallel with this further north. But all this street had a peculiarly Sabbath-day appearance, for there was scarcely an inhabitant to be seen, and they were commonly women or young children, for the greater part of the able-bodied men were gone to sea, as usual. This makes them very

quiet towns. Baker said that half or three quarters of the men were gone.

This afternoon it mizzled a little. At the supper-table there was a youngish man who, looking very serious, at length observed to me, "Your countenance is very familiar to me, sir." "Where do you think you have seen me?" I asked. "It seems to me that I have been *consigned to you*," said he. This was said with such a serious tone and look that the suspicion crossed my mind that he meant spiritually, but I soon remembered where I was and the employment of the inhabitants.

Herring River was near by, and Baker sent a little boy to set an eel-pot for eels for breakfast. We had some of the herring for supper. He said that the eels went *down* the river in the spring, and *up* in the fall! That last winter many were found in holes under the ice (where passers broke through), left dry by the tide. He said it was a consideration with poor men who talked of migrating West that here shellfish and eels were abundant and easily obtained. Spoke of the large tract of wood running down the centre of the Cape from Sandwich, three miles wide and thirty long, and he declared repeatedly, since I looked surprised, that there was more wood in Barnstable County than in Ohio *County*. His father-in-law owned $75,000 worth thereabouts. Wood was worth six dollars per cord.

June 17. This morning had for breakfast fresh eels from Herring River, caught in an eel-pot baited with horseshoe clams [*sic*] cut up.

Crossed Herring River, and went down to the shore

and walked a mile or more eastward along the beach. This beach seems to be laid down too long on the map. The sea never runs very much here, since this shore is protected from the swell by Monomoy. The Harbor (?) of West Harwich is merely some wharves protected by a shoal offshore. Passed a place where they had been taking bluefish with a seine and, as usual, had left their backbones on the beach. There was a scup also, a good fish. A fish hawk (?) or eagle sailed low directly over my head as I sat on the bank. The bank is quite low there. I could see Monomoy, very low and indistinct, stretching much further south than I expected. The wooded portions of this, and perhaps of Nauset Beach further north, looked like islets on the water. You could not distinguish much without a glass, but the lighthouse and fishermen's houses at the south end loomed very large to the naked eye.

I soon turned inland through the woods and struck north to the centre of Harwich. At a retired house where I inquired the road to Brewster, a woman told me that if I wanted to go to Brewster I had come a good deal out of my way, and yet she did not know where I had come from, and I was certainly taking the right course to keep in the way. But they presume that a traveller inquiring the way wishes to be anywhere but where he is. They take me for a roadster, and do not know where *my* way is. They take it for granted that my way is a direct one from village to village.

I go along the settled road, where the houses are interspersed with woods, in an unaccountably desponding mood, but when I come out upon a bare and soli-

tary heath am at once exhilarated. This is a common experience in my travelling. I plod along, thinking what a miserable world this is and what miserable fellows we that inhabit it, wondering what it is tempts men to live in it; but anon I leave the towns behind and am lost in some boundless heath, and life becomes gradually more tolerable, if not even glorious.

After passing the centre of Harwich, with its seminary, I struck north to the ponds between Harwich and Brewster. Saw some white pond-lilies open that had been dropped by the roadside. Disturbed a very large water snake sunning on the bank of a pond-hole.

At what is called on the map Hinckley's Pond, in Harwich, met with the first cranberry-patch. A man told me there were twelve acres here in all, in one body, owned by Albert Clark of Boston, and by others, and this was the largest patch on that part the Cape. They formed a handsome, perfectly level bed, a field, a redeemed meadow, adjoining the pond, the plants in perfectly straight rows eighteen inches apart, in coarse white sand which had been carted in. What with the runners and the moss, etc., between, they made a uniform green bed, very striking and handsome. Baker had complained that the cranberry vines were seriously injured by worms, would be, perhaps, destroyed. He and some others had turned theirs into English grass. They also are apt to become too thick and cease to bear well. They then sell them to others to set out for $5.00 a square rod, as another informed me by the pond. This was a large and interesting pond.

A little further, I came to Long Pond, and passed be-

tween it and Bangs Pond by a low beach, and took my lunch on a pine hill with a flat summit, on the Brewster side of Long Pond, near the house of one Cohoon. This is a noble lake some two miles long, as a man there told me (the Historical Collections say the chain of ponds is three and two thirds miles long), with high, steep, sliding sand-banks, more or less wooded, and is the source of Herring River, which empties into the sound on the south. Connected with Bangs and Hinckley's Ponds. This high hill with a flat summit, on which was an open pitch pine wood, very suitable for picnics, appeared to be the best point to view it from. You could see at least three ponds at once. Situated about halfway between the two seas, on the shore of this noble lake, it appeared to be the best place for an *inland* hotel on the Cape. What was that slender, succulent, somewhat samphire-like plant in the sand-bank by this pond? After bathing, I abandoned the road and struck across the country northeast by chart and compass, for Orleans, passing between this and another large pond called Sheep Pond, on the north, the country being at first woody, then open.

After passing Sheep Pond I knocked at a house near the road from Brewster to Chatham to inquire the way to Orleans. This house was about a quarter of a mile from the road, in the fields, and the usual Sabbath-like serenity reigned around it. There was no beaten path through the grass to the front door, so I approached the back side. As I stood at the door while the woman was getting me a glass of water, I was struck by the peculiar neatness of the yellow painted floor, so clean,

perhaps, because the husband was gone to sea with his dirty boots. I inquired the way of another woman who lived on the road near by, who was just setting her dinner-table when I thought it must be mid-afternoon. She directed me by a road or cart-path through the woods that ran due southeast, but I knew better than to follow this long. Concluded she meant the south part of Orleans, and so I struck off northeast by fainter cart-paths through the woods. I kept on through uninterrupted wood by various paths somewhat east of north for about an hour, avoiding those that ran southeast, because I knew by the map that there were large ponds east of me which I must go round on the north. At length, seeing no end to the woods, laying down my pack, I climbed an oak and looked off; but the woods bounded the horizon as far as I could see on every side, and eastward it was several miles, for on that side I observed a great depression where a large pond lay concealed in the forest. All the life I could see was a red-tailed or hen hawk circling not far above my head. This gave me a new idea of the extent of Cape Cod woodland. After a while, travelling by compass alone, without path, I fell into a more beaten path than I had left, and came very unexpectedly upon a house on the shore of the pond, in the midst of the woods, in the most secluded place imaginable. There was a small orchard even. It was mid-afternoon, and, to judge from appearances and from the sounds, you would have supposed that only the hens and chickens were at home; but after my first knock I heard a slight stir within, and though all was

still immediately, they being afraid, I knew better than [to] give it up, but knocked all round the house at five doors in succession, there being two to a stoop, and by the time I got round to the first again there was a woman with a child in her arms there ready to answer my questions.

I found that I had not come out of my way.

Of the woods of the Cape which I walked through in Yarmouth, Dennis, Harwich, and Brewster, it is to be said that they are dry pine and oak woods, extensive but quite low, commonly, with an abundance of bear-berry and checkerberry in the more open parts, the latter forming an almost uninterrupted bed for great distances.

I soon came out on the open hills in the northeast part of Brewster, from which I overlooked the Bay, some two miles distant. This was a grand place to walk. There were two or three more of those peculiar ponds with high, shiny sand-banks, by which you detected them before you saw the water, as if freshly scooped out of the high plains or a table-land. The banks were like those of the sea on the Back Side, though on a smaller scale, and they had clear sandy shores. One pond would often be separated from another by low curving beaches or necks of land. The features of the surrounding landscape simple and obvious. The sod, so short and barren, affords the best ground for walking. Brewster is much more hilly than Eastham. The latter is, indeed, quite flat. In short, Brewster, with its noble ponds, its bare hills, gray with poverty-grass and lichens, and its secluded cottages, is a

very interesting town to an inlander. Saw a woman mending a fence nearly a mile from a house, using an axe.

Barber appears to be mistaken about seeing both seas from the county road in this town, — to have misunderstood the Massachusetts Historical Collections. I passed over some hills there where pine seed had recently been planted with a hoe only, about four feet apart. At first I thought the turtles had been laying their eggs there, but I observed them in straight lines and detected some little pines an inch high just up. Some of the Cape roads are repaired with the coarsest bushes and roots, with such earth as adheres to them.

Jeremiah's Gutter is what is called Boat Meadow River on the map. I saw the town bounds there. There, too, was somebody's Folly, who dug a canal, which the sand filled up again. About a mile north of this, I left the road and struck across west of the road to near the Eastham Meeting-house, crossing a part of that "beach" where once wheat grew, and by Great Pond, where a canal has been talked of. Passed some large tupelo trees. The greater part of Eastham an open plain, and also the southwest part of Wellfleet. Put up at the Traveller's Home (Cobb's), so called, at the Camp Ground, just within the woods.

Cobb says he has known formerly one man in Eastham export twelve hundred bushels of grain from his own farm. Twenty of corn to an acre is an average crop in a fair year in his neighborhood, which is better soil than usual. Thought likely there was not more raised in the town now than used. Cobb thought the

Nauset lights not of much use, because so often you could not see them, and if you could they would not prevent your coming ashore. Sailors preferred to depend on the "blue pigeon" (lead). He said that the inhabitants lived on the West or Bay Side, though no more fertile or fishy, because their harbors were there. On the Back Side they could not get off to fish more than once a fortnight, but on the West almost every day. He thought the Cape wasting on both sides there. That the Truro Insurance Company had a hard time to meet their payments. They import cedar posts from Maine, which, with rails, make a fence costing about seventy-five cents a rod, but they are not so durable as formerly, being made of younger trees.

According to Pratt's History, first camp-meeting in 1828.

June 18. *Thursday.* From Traveller's Home to Small's in Truro.

A mizzling and rainy day with thick driving fog; a drizzling rain, or "drisk," as one called it. I struck across into the stage-road, a quarter of a mile east, and followed that a mile or more into an extensive bare plain tract called Silver Springs, in the southwest part of Wellfleet, — according to Pratt, one third of Wellfleet was covered mostly with pines in 1844, — then turned off northeast through the bushes, to the Back Side, three quarters of a mile distant. The desert was about one hundred and fifteen rods wide on the bank where I struck it. You might safely say it was from thirty to one hundred rods or more in width. But the bank

was apparently not so high as in Truro. This was on that long Table-Land in Wellfleet. Where the bank was covered with coarse pebbles, however high, I judged that it could not have been formed by the wind, but rather the small sand-hills on the west edge of the desert were formed of its finer particles and remains, leaving the coarser parts here. However, I afterwards saw where, in the hollows more or less deep, the sand blown up from the beach had covered the dark stratum of the original surface ten feet deep with *fine sand*, which was now densely covered with bushes.

As I walked on the top of the bank for a mile or two before I came to a hollow by which to descend, though it rained but little, the strong wind there drove that and the mist against my unprotected legs so as to wet me through and plaster over the legs of my pants with sand. The wind was southeasterly.

I observed, in a few stiller places behind a bar, a yellowish scum on the water close to the shore, which I suspect was the pollen of the pine, lately in full bloom, which had been wafted on to the ocean. Small thought at first that I referred to a scum like that which collects on salt-vats.

Stopped to dry me about 11 A. M. at a house near John Newcomb's, who they told me died last winter, ninety-five years old (or would have been now had he lived?). I had shortly before picked up a Mother-Carey's-chicken, which was just washed up dead on the beach. This I carried tied to the tip of my umbrella, dangling outside. When the inhabitants saw me come up from the beach this stormy day, with this emblem

dangling from my umbrella, and saw me set it up in a corner carefully to be out of the way of cats, they may have taken me for a crazy man. It is remarkable how wet the grass will be there in a misty day alone; more so than after a rain with us.

The Mother-Carey's-chicken was apparently about thirteen inches in alar extent, black-brown, with seven primaries, the second a little longer than the third; rump and vent white, making a sort of ring of white, breast ashy-brown, legs black with yellowish webs, bill black with a protuberance above.

I think there were more boat-houses in the hollows along the Back Side than when I first walked there. These are the simplest and cheapest little low, narrow, and long sheds, just enough to cover a boat, within the line of the bank at some hollow. But in my three walks there I never chanced to see a man about one of them, or any boating there.

Soon after leaving Newcomb's Hollow, I passed a hulk of a vessel about a hundred feet long, which the sea had cast up in the sand. She lay at high-water mark high up the beach, the ribs at her bows rising higher than my head above the sand; then for sixty or seventy feet there was *nothing* to be seen of her, and at last only the outline of her stern ribs projecting slightly above the sand for a short distance. Small suggested that this might be the hulk of the Franklin, lost there seven or eight years ago. They sometimes buy and break them up and carry them piecemeal up the bank, all which is a great job; or they burn them down to the sand and get out the iron alone. It was

an impressive sight to see, lying thus insignificant, the hulk of a large (? I walked five rods beside it) vessel which had been lost for years, now cast up and half buried in the sand, like a piece of driftwood. Apparently no longer regarded. It looked very small and insignificant under that impending bank.

In Newcomb's Hollow I had already entered a Humane house. A sign over the door said "For Cases of Distress only," and directed where the key of the lifeboat was to be obtained. Mine was a case of distress. Within was a simple apartment containing the boat, a bench, a fireplace and chimney, an india-rubber bucket, a few armfuls of wood, a keg of rags, a tin case with matches and two candles and a candlestick over the fireplace, etc. Also an extract from the laws of the State to protect the property of the Humane Society. I did not look closely for oil or food. I actually sought the Humane house for shelter. It was with peculiar reflections that I contemplated these two candles and those matches prepared to keep the spark of life in some suffering fellow-creature. This was before I went to the house by Newcomb's.

The waves ran pretty well on account of the easterly wind. I observed how merely undulatory was the motion of the waves. A floating chip or the like on the back of the largest wave often was not advanced in the least toward the shore, however great the undulation.

I noticed dor-bugs washed up many miles south of the Highland Light.

I think it was north of Newcomb's Hollow that I

passed a perpendicular promontory of clay in the bank, which was conspicuous a good way through the fog.

Reached the Highland Light about 2 P. M. The *Smilacina racemosa* was *just* out of bloom on the bank. They call it the "wood lily" there. Uncle Sam called it "snake-corn," and said it looked like corn when it first came up.

Small says that the lighthouse was built about sixty years ago. He knows by his own age. A new lighthouse was built some twenty-five years ago. They are now building another still on the same spot.

He once drove some cattle up the beach on the Back Side from Newcomb's Hollow to Pamet River Hollow, — a singular road by which to drive cows, yet well fenced! They were rather wild and gave him some trouble by trying to get up the bank at first, though in vain. He could easily head them off when they turned. And also they wanted to drink the salt water. They did not mind the waves, and if the sea had been the other side, where they had belonged and wanted to go, would have taken to it.

The sea was not frozen there exactly as I had inferred from the papers last winter. Small never knew it to be frozen smooth there so as to bear, but there was last winter a mere brash of pieces several inches thick reaching out half a mile or more, but you cannot go out on it. It is worth the while to see the ice piled up on the shore.

Small says that the Truro fishermen who were lost in the great shipwreck were on the Nantucket Shoals. Four or five vessels were lost with all aboard. They

may have been endeavoring to reach Provincetown Harbor. He spoke of one of his neighbors who was drowned in Truro, and very soon after his bones were found picked clean by the beach-fleas. Thinks you could get off in a boat from the Back Side one day out of three at *the right tide*. He thinks that what we thought a shark may have been a big bass, since one was taken just alive soon after in that cove.

A youngish man came into Small's with a thick outside coat, when a girl asked where he got that coat. He answered that it was taken off a man that came ashore dead, and he had worn it a year or more. The girls or young ladies expressed surprise that he should be willing to wear [it] and said, "You 'd not dare to go to sea with that coat on." But he answered that he might just as well embark in that coat as any other.

They brought me an *Attacus Cecropia* which a boy had found in a swamp near by on the 17th. Its body was large like the one I have preserved, while the two I found to have come out in my chamber meanwhile, and to have laid their eggs, had comparatively small bodies.

One said there was a little bit of a rill of fresh water near Small's, though it could not be called a brook.

June 19. *Friday*. Fog still, but I walked about a mile north onward on the beach.

The sea was still running considerably. It is surprising how rapidly the water soaks into the sand, and is even dried up between each undulation. The sand has many holes in it, about an eighth of an inch over, which

Highland Light, Cape Cod

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seem to have been made by the beach-flea. These have a firm and as if artificial rim or curb, and it is remarkable that the waves flow two or three feet over them with force without obliterating them. They help soak up the water. As I walked along close to the edge of the water, the sea oscillating like a pendulum before me and each billow flowing with a flat white foaming edge and a rounded outline up the sand, it reminded me of the white toes of blue-stockinged feet thrust forward from under the garments in an endless dance. It was a contra-dance to the shore. Some waves would flow unexpectedly high and fill my shoes with water before I was aware of it. It is very exciting for a while to walk where half the floor before you is thus incessantly fluctuating.

There is frequently, if not for the most part, a bar just off the shore on which the waves first break and spend more or less of their violence, and I saw that the way to land in a boat at such a time would be to row along outside this bar and its breakers, till you came to an opening in it, then enter and row up or down within the bar to a comparatively safe place to land.

I turned up the first hollow. A piping plover peeped around me there, and feigned lameness, — though I at first thought that she was dusting herself on the sand, — to attract me away from her nest evidently.

Returned inland. The poverty-grass was fully out, in bright-yellow mounds or hillocks, more like painted clods than flowers, or, on the bare sandy hills and plains of the Cape, they looked like tufts of yellow

lichens on a roof. They indicate such soil as the cladonia lichen with us. If the soil were better they would not be found there. These hillocks are about as big as a large ant-hill — some have spread to eight or ten feet in diameter, but are flat and broken more or less — and commonly dead in the middle or perhaps one side, but I saw many perfect dense hemispheres of yellow flowers. As the sand gathers around them, they rise above it, and they seemed to bloom and flourish better when thus nearly buried in sand. A hemisphere eighteen inches in diameter would rest flat on the surface for six inches in width on the outside and be rather loosely rooted in the middle, for you could easily lift it all up. The *Hudsonia ericoides* was the most common, and the *tomentosa* appeared to be less in hillocks, *i. e.* more broken and dead. The poverty-grass emits a common sweetish scent as you walk over the fields. It blossoms on the edges first. You meet with it in Plymouth as you approach the peculiar soil of the Cape.

June 20. *Saturday.* Fog still.

A man working on the lighthouse, who lives at the Pond Village, says that he raised potatoes and pumpkins there where a vessel once anchored. That was when they let the salt water into the pond. Says the flags there now are barrel flags; that the chair flag is smaller, partly three-sided, and has no bur; perhaps now all gone. Speaking of the effect of oil on the water, this man said that a boat's crew came ashore safely from their vessel on the Bay Side of Truro some time

ago in a storm, when the wind blowed square on to the land, only by heaving over oil. The spectators did not think they would reach the shore without being upset. When I expressed some doubt of the efficacy of this, he observed in the presence of Small and others, "We always take a bottle of oil when looking for sea clams, and, pouring out a few drops, can look down six or seven feet."

We dined on halibut caught on the ledges some three miles off the Back Side.

There was a carpenter who worked on the lighthouse boarding at Small's, who had lived sixteen years on the extremity of Cape Ann. When I asked him about Salvages, he said it was a large bare rock, perhaps fifty yards long and a dozen feet high, about two miles from the shore at Sandy Bay, outside Avery's Rock. That he and all the inhabitants of the Cape always called it "Selvaygias." Did not know but it had something to do with salvage for wrecks. This man, who is familiar with the shore of New England north of Cape Cod, thought that there was no beach equal to this for grandeur. He thought August the most foggy month.

Small thought that the shore at the mouth of Pamet River about held its own.

I saw an extract in a Cape (*Yarmouth Register*) paper from a promised History of the Cape by Dr. Dix, an Englishman, who was owing Small for board, etc. (page 136 of it). There was also advertised "The Annals of Barnstable County and its several Towns," etc., by Frederick Freeman, to be in two volumes, 8vo, $4.00. This will probably be out first.

A child asked concerning a bobolink, "What makes he sing so sweet, Mother? Do he eat flowers?"

Talked with an old lady who thought that the beach plums were better than cherries.

Visited the telegraph station, tended by one Hall, just north of the light. He has a small volume called the "Boston Harbor Signal Book," containing the names of some three thousand vessels, their owners, etc., and a code of signals. There were also the private signals of more than a hundred merchants on a large sheet on the wall. There was also a large volume called "The Universal Code of Signals," Marryat (Richardson, London), 1854, containing the names of some twenty thousand vessels of all nations, but chiefly English, and an extensive system of signalling, by which he could [carry on] a long conversation with a vessel on almost any subject. He said that he could make out the name seven miles off and the signal sometimes twenty miles.[1] Thought there would be a fog as long as the wind was southwest. "How is it in Boston?" I asked. "I will ask," said he. *Tick tick tick* — "Wind northeast and cloudy." (Here it was southwest and thick fog.) He thought that there [were] more vessels to be seen passing this point than any other in the United States. One day when telegraphing the passing vessels he put in "a fox passing," for there was one running between the station and the edge of the bank. I observed the name of the brig Leader displayed on

[1] The man at Hull July 24, 1851, said they could tell the kind of vessel thirty miles off, the number at masthead ten or twelve miles, name on hull six or seven miles.

a flag for me. The report was, "Brig Leader in." It *may* be a month before the vessel reaches Boston.

The operator said that last winter the wind between his station and the bank blew him three rods through the air, and he was considerably hurt when he fell. A boy was blown head over heels. The fences were blown up, post and rail. There was no wind just this side the edge of the bank, but if you lay down there and extended your hand over the edge of the bank it would be blown suddenly upward, or if you cast off a large piece of wood it would be blown up thirty or forty feet high. Both boys and men often amuse themselves by running and trying to jump off the bank with their jackets spread, and being blown back. (Small confirmed this.) Hall said that he could not possibly jump off. *Sometimes* and in *some* places, pebbles as big as chestnuts are blown far over the bank.

Hall said that he saw very large flocks of geese; had counted as many as six hundred go by at once, reaching three miles; and sometimes alight on the water.

Talked with Uncle Sam, who was picking gooseberries on the bank, — for the sun shone a short time. He showed me some fossil shells imbedded in stone which he had picked up on the *high* bank, just south of the light, and laid on his pile of driftwood. He wanted to know something about them. Said that a lecturer down at Pamet River had said, as he was told, that the Norwegians who formerly came to this country cemented them together. He had come down to watch a piece of driftwood, perhaps a stump, which had been

lodged on a bar for a day or two. He was trying to make out what it was. There is something picked up on the shore of the Cape and advertised in every paper.

This was the third foggy day. It cleared up the next day noon, but the night after and the next day was foggy again. It is a serious objection to visiting or living on the Cape that you lose so many days by fog. Small said that a week of fog at this season would be nothing remarkable. You can see that the fog is local and of no great thickness. From time to time the sun almost or quite shines, and you can see half a mile, or to Provincetown even, and then, against all your rules, it thickens up again. An inlander would think [it] was going to clear up twenty times when it may last a week. Small said that they were very common with southerly winds, being blown up from Nantucket Shoals; that they were good for almost everything but corn, yet there was probably less rain there at this season than on the mainland. I have now visited the Cape four times in as many different years, once in October, twice in June, and once in July, having spent in all about one month there, and about one third the days were foggy, with or without rain. According to Alden (in Massachusetts Historical Collections, vol. v, First Series, page 57), Nantucket was discovered by a famous old Indian giant named Maushop, who waded the sea to it, and there filling his pipe with "poke," his smoke made fog. Whence that island is so much in the fog, and the aborigines on the opposite portion of the Cape, seeing a fog over the water at a distance, would say,

"There comes old Maushop's smoke." The Gloucester carpenter thought August the worst month for fog on the coast.

The fog lasted this time, with the exception of one afternoon and one or two slight breakings away, five days, or from Thursday morning till I reached Minot's Ledge, Monday noon. How much longer it continued on the Cape I do not know. The Cape people with whom I talked very generally denied that it [was] a phenomenon in any degree peculiar to the Cape. They said that it was just such weather at Boston. Indeed, some denied that it was fog at all. They said with some asperity that it was rain. Yet more rain would have fallen in a smart shower in the country in twenty minutes than in these five days on the Cape. When I got home I found that there had been an abundance [of] cloudy weather and rain within a week, but not one foggy day in Concord.

Small thought that Lieutenant Davis might have misunderstood him. He meant to say that the offshore current (three miles off) set down the Cape, and wrecks in it went down the coast, the inshore one sets up.

I noticed several lengths of fence hereabouts made chiefly of oars, very long ones.

A Cape Cod house is low, unpainted, shingled on the sides. They have many windows, even under the roofs to light the closets there, and as the chambers can only be lighted at one end, there are commonly two windows there. Once I saw a triangular blind under the peak, though there was no window beneath it. The windows commonly afford a view of the bay

or ocean, though the house may be sheltered by some hill, or they are very snugly placed in a hollow, apparently as secluded as among the New Hampshire hills.

June 21. *Sunday.* About noon it cleared up, and after dinner I set out for Provincetown, straight across the country to the Bay where the new road strikes it, directly through the pine plantation about one mile from the lighthouse. The pines have apparently not done so well here as in some other places on the Cape. I observed a tuft of crow-berry, together with poverty-grass, about one mile west of the light. This part of Truro affords singularly interesting and cheering walks for me, with regular hollows or dimples shutting out the sea as completely as if in the midst of the continent, though when you stand on the plain you commonly see the sails of vessels standing up or down the coast on each side of you, though you may not see the water. At first you may take them for the roofs of barns or houses. It is plain for miles without a tree, where the new telegraph-wires are a godsend to the birds, affording them something to perch upon. That solitude was sweet to me as a flower. I sat down on the boundless level and enjoyed the solitude, drank it in, the medicine for which I had pined, worth more than the bear-berry so common on the Cape. As I was approaching the Bay through a sandy hollow a mile east of High Head, I found two or three arrow-points and a rude axe or hammer, a flattish stone from the beach with a deep groove chipped around it.

The beach on the Bay Side was completely strewn

with seaweed (the grassy kind), which does not grow on the Atlantic side, as if the Bay were a meadow compared with the Atlantic. The beach was harder than the Back Side, the hardest part being on the weed at high-water line. The skulls and backbones of blackfish, their vertebræ and spinal processes, and disk-shaped bones, five inches in diameter, from the spine were strewn all along. These looked like rough crackers.[1]

Also the ribs of whale (probably humpbacked), — they get humpback and finback and right whales, I heard, — six feet long, lay under the bank, hardly to be distinguished from their gray rails. Some of those whale ribs, ten inches wide, were from time to time set up in the sand, like mile stones (or bones); they seemed to answer that purpose along the new road. They had taken a whale in Provincetown Harbor on the previous 17th, and stripped off the blubber at one of the wharves. I saw many dogfish whose livers had been extracted.

At East Harbor River, as I sat on the Truro end of the bridge, I saw a great flock of mackerel gulls, one hundred at least, on a sandy point, whitening the

[1] The old traveller Lawson, in his account of the fishes of Carolina, says of the "Bottle-Nose," referring apparently to this fish, though this is the popular name for a different species in England, that "They are never seen to swim leisurely, as sometimes all other fish do, but are continually running after their prey in great shoals, like wild horses, leaping now and then above the water."

If those disk-shaped bones with nothing but muscle between them were really inserted between the vertebræ as it appeared, they must make the spine very flexible as well as wonderfully elastic and strong.

shore there like so many white stones on the shore and in the water, uttering all together their vibrating shrill note. They had black heads, light bluish-slate wings, and light rump and tail and beneath. From time to time all or most would rise and circle about with a clamor, then settle again on the same spot close together.

Soon after crossing the bridge, I turned off and ascended Mt. Ararat. It exhibited a remarkable landscape: on the one side the desert, of smooth and spotless palest fawn-colored sand, slightly undulating, and beyond, the Atlantic; on the other, the west, side, a few valleys and hills, *densely* clothed with a short, almost moss-like (to look down at) growth of huckleberry, blueberry, bear-berry, josh-pear (which is so abundant in Provincetown), bayberry, rose, checkerberry, and other bushes, and beyond, the Bay. All these bushes formed an even and dense covering to the sand-hills, much as bear-berry alone might. It was a very strange scenery. You would think you might be in Labrador, or some other place you have imagined. The shrubbery at the very summit was swarming with mosquitoes, which troubled me when I sat down, but they did not rise above the level of the bushes.

At the Pilgrim House, though it was not crowded, they put me into a small attic chamber which had two double beds in it, and only one window, high in a corner, twenty and a half inches by twenty-five and a half, in the alcove when it was swung open, and it required a chair to look out conveniently. Fortunately it was not

a cold night and the window could be kept open, though at the risk of being visited by the cats, which appear to swarm on the roofs of Provincetown like the mosquitoes on the summits of its hills. I have spent four memorable nights there in as many different years, and have added considerable thereby to my knowledge of the natural history of the cat and the bedbug. Sleep was out of the question. A night in one of the attics of Provincetown! to say nothing of what is to be learned in entomology. It would be worth the while to send a professor there, one who was also skilled in entomology. Such is your *Pilgerruhe* or Pilgrims'-Rest. Every now and then one of these animals on its travels leaped from a neighboring roof on to mine, with such a noise as if a six-pounder had fallen within two feet of my head, — the discharge of a catapult, — a twelve-pounder discharged by a catapult, — and then followed such a scrambling as banished sleep for a long season, while I watched lest they came in at the open window. A kind of foretaste, methought, of the infernal regions. I did n't wonder they gave quitclaim deeds of their land here. My experience is that you fare best at private houses. The barroom may be defined a place to spit.

> "Soon as the evening shades prevail,
> The *cats take* up the wondrous tale."

At still midnight, when, half awake, half asleep, you seem to be weltering in your own blood on a battlefield, you hear the stealthy tread of padded feet belonging to some animal of the cat tribe, perambulating the roof within a few inches of your head.

I had already this evening called on Mr. Atwood, the Representative of the town and one of the commissioners appointed by the legislature to superintend the experiments in the artificial breeding of fishes. He said that he knew (I think) eighty-two kinds of fishes there.

When Mr. Pool, the Doorkeeper of the House of Representatives, — if that is his name and title, — who makes out a list of the Representatives and their professions, asked him his business, he answered, "Fisherman." At which Pool was disturbed and said that no representative had ever called himself a fisherman before. It would not do to print it so. And so Atwood is put down as "Master Mariner"!! So much for American democracy. I reminded him that Fisherman had been a title of honor with a large party ever since the Christian Era at least. When next we have occasion to speak of the apostles I suppose we should call them "Master Mariners"!

Atwood said that his brother here took the bone shark recently which I read was thirty feet long. Fog again at night.

June 22. Monday. Took the steamer Acorn [?] about 9 A. M. for Boston, in the fog. The captain said that the mate to the whale taken on the 17th had been about the steamer all night. It was a thick fog with some rain, and we saw no land nor a single sail, till near Minot's Ledge. The boat stopped and whistled once or twice. The monotony was only relieved by the numerous petrels, those black sea-swallows, incessantly

skimming over the undulating [surface], a few inches above and parallel with it, and occasionally picking some food from it. Now they dashed past our stern and now across our bows, as if we were stationary, though going at the rate of a dozen knots an hour. It is remarkable what great solitudes there may be on this bay, notwithstanding all its commerce, and going from Boston to Provincetown you might be wrecked in clear weather, without being seen by any passing vessel. Once, when the fog lifted a little and the boat was stopped, and the engine whistled, I thought that I saw an open sea without an object for three or four miles at least. We held on, and it suddenly thickened up again, and yet in three minutes, notwithstanding the fog, we saw the light-boat right ahead. This shows how deceptive and dangerous fogs are. I should have said we might have run half an hour without danger of striking any object.

The greatest depth in the Bay between Long Point, Provincetown, and Manomet, Plymouth, according to Coast Survey charts, is about twenty-five fathoms.

Get home at 5 P. M.[1]

It seems that Sophia found an *Attacus Cecropia* out in my chamber last Monday, or the 15th. It soon went to laying eggs on the window-sill, sash, books, etc., of which *vide* a specimen. Though the window was open (blinds closed), it did not escape. Another was seen at the window outside the house on the south side (mother's chamber) on the 21st, which S. took in, supposing it the first which had got out, but she

[1] *Vide* July 7th.

found the first still in the chamber. This, too, she says, went right to laying eggs. I am not sure whether this, too, came from the other cocoon. Neither was quite so large as the one I had. The second had broken off the better part of its wings. Their bodies were quite small, perhaps because they were empty of eggs. I let them go. The eggs are large, pretty close together, glued to the wood or paper.

June 23. Skinner, the harness-maker, tells me that he found a black duck's nest Sunday before the last, *i. e.* the 14th, with perhaps a dozen eggs in it, a mere hollow on the top of a tussock, four or five feet within a clump of bushes forming an islet (in the spring) in Hubbard's great meadow. He scared up the duck when within a few feet. Pratt says he knows of a black walnut at Hunt's on Ponkawtasset.

P. M. — Looked for the black duck's nest, but could find no trace of it. Probably the duck led her young to the river as soon as hatched. What with gunners, dogs, pickerel, bullfrogs, hawks, etc., it is a wonder if any of them escape.

Small rudbeckia, *i. e. hirta*, at Hubbard's Bath.

June 24. *Wednesday.* P. M. — To Farmer's Owl-Nest Swamp.

Melvin thinks there cannot be many black ducks' nests in the town, else his dog would find them, for he will follow their trail as well as another bird's, or a fox. The dog once caught five black ducks here but partly grown. Farmer was hoeing corn with his Irishmen.

The crows had got much of it, and when he came to a vacant hill he took a few beans from his pocket — for each hoer had a pocketful — and dropped them there, so making his rows complete. Melvin was there with his dog, which had just caught a woodchuck. M. said that he once saw a fox jump over a wall with something in his mouth, and, going up, the fox dropped a woodchuck and a mouse, which he had caught and was carrying home to his young. He had eaten the head of the woodchuck. When M. looked there the next morning they were gone.

Went to Farmer's Swamp to look for the screech owl's[1] nest Farmer had found. You go about forty-five rods on the first path to the left in the woods and then turn to the left a few rods. I found the nest at last near the top of a middling-sized white pine, about thirty feet from the ground. As I stood by the tree, the old bird dashed by within a couple of rods, uttering a peculiar mewing sound, which she kept up amid the bushes, a blackbird in close pursuit of her. I found the nest empty, on one side of the main stem but close to it, resting on some limbs. It was made of twigs rather less than an eighth of an inch thick and was almost flat above, only an inch lower in the middle than at the edge, about sixteen inches in diameter and six or eight inches thick, with the twigs in the midst, and beneath was mixed sphagnum and sedge from the swamp beneath, and the lining or flooring was coarse strips of grape-vine bark; the whole pretty firmly matted together.

[1] [The situation of the nest and Thoreau's description of the notes indicate a long-eared owl rather than a screech owl.]

How common and important a material is grape-vine bark for birds' nests! Nature wastes nothing. There were white droppings of the young on the nest and one large pellet of fur and small bones two and a half inches long. In the meanwhile, the old bird was uttering that hoarse worried note from time to time, somewhat like a partridge's, flying past from side to side and alighting amid the trees or bushes. When I had descended, I detected one young one two thirds grown perched on a branch of the next tree, about fifteen feet from the ground, which was all the while staring at me with its great yellow eyes. It was gray with gray horns and a dark beak. As I walked past near it, it turned its head steadily, always facing me, without moving its body, till it looked directly the opposite way over its back, but never offered to fly. Just then I thought surely that I heard a puppy faintly barking at me four or five rods distant amid the bushes, having tracked me into the swamp, — *what what, what what what.* It was exactly such a noise as the barking of a very small dog or perhaps a fox. But it was the old owl, for I presently saw her making it. She repeated [*sic*] perched quite near. She was generally reddish-brown or partridge-colored, the breast mottled with dark brown and fawn-color in downward strings [*sic*], and had plain fawn-colored thighs.

Found there the *Calla palustris*, out of bloom, and the naumbergia, now in prime, which was hardly begun on the 9th at Bateman Pond Swamp. This was about four or five rods southerly of the owl tree. The large hastate tear-thumb is very common there; and

what is that large, coarse, flag-like sedge, with two ridges to its blade? Just out of bloom. In dense fields in water, like the flag.

I think that this is a cold swamp, *i. e.* it is springy and shady, and the water feels more than usually cold to my feet.

Returning, heard a fine, clear note from a bird on a white birch near me, — *whit whit, whit whit, whit whit,* (very fast) *ter phe phe phe,* — sounding perfectly novel. Looking round, I saw it was the huckleberry-bird, for it was near and plain to be seen.

Looked over Farmer's eggs and list of names. He has several which I have not. Is not his "chicklisee," after all, the Maryland yellow-throat? The eggs were numbered with a pen, — 1, 2, 3, etc., — and corresponding numbers written against the names on the cover of the pasteboard box in which were the eggs. Among the rest I read, "*Fire never redder.*" That must be the tanager. He laughed and said that this was the way he came to call it by that name: Many years ago, one election-day, when he and other boys, or young men, were out gunning to see how many birds they could kill, Jonathan Hildreth, who lived near by, saw one of these birds on the top of a tree before him in the woods, but he did not see a deep ditch that crossed his course between him and it. As he raised his gun, he exclaimed, "Fire never redder!" and, taking a step or two forward, with his eye fixed on the bird, fell headlong into the ditch, and so the name became a byword among his fellows.

June 25. Most of the mountain-ash trees on the street are the European, as Prichard's, Whiting's, etc. The American ones (*Pyrus Aucuparia* is the European) in Cheney's (from Winchendon) row have only opened within a day or two; that American one in Mrs. Hoar's yard, apparently a week. The fruit of the European one is as large as small peas already.

P. M. — To Gowing's Swamp. White pine effete. *Gaylussacia dumosa* apparently in a day or two.[1]

June 26. Friday. Stand over a bream's nest close to the shore at Hubbard's rear wood. At length she ventures back into it, after many approaches. The apparent young bream, hardly half an inch long, are hovering over it all the while in a little school, never offering to swim away from over that yellow spot; such is their instinct. The old one at length returns and takes up her watch beneath, but I notice no recognition of each other.[2]

The largest tupelo I remember in Concord is on the northerly edge of Staples's clearing. See a pack of partridges as big as robins at least. I must be near bobolinks' nests many times these days, — in E. Hosmer's meadow by the garlic and here in Charles Hubbard's, — but the birds are so overanxious, though you may be pretty far off, and so shy about visiting their nests while you are there, that you watch them in vain. The female flies close past and perches near you on a rock or stump and chirps *whit tit, whit tit, whit it tit tit te* incessantly.

[1] Not quite in prime July 2d.

[2] Some nests are high and dry July 5th.

Some of the *Salix Torreyana* by railroad is cordate and some not. The sterile one there is not, nor those near it.

June 27. P. M. — Up Assabet.

See apparently a young bobolink fluttering over the meadow. The garlic not even yet quite.

In the Wheeler meadow, the bushy one southwest of Egg Rock, the coarse sedge[1] — I think the same with that in the Great Meadows — evidently grows in patches with a rounded outline; *i. e.*, its edge is a succession of blunt, rounded capes, with a very distinct outline amid the other kinds of grass and weeds.

I cannot find one of the three bits of white cotton string which I tied to willows in that neighborhood in the spring, and I have no doubt that the birds, perhaps crow blackbirds, have got every one for their nests. I must drive down a stake for a mark next time.

June 28. *Geum Virginianum* some time, apparently, past its prime by red cohosh. It was not nearly out June 7th; say, then, the 18th.

I hear on all hands these days, from the elms and other trees, the twittering peep of young gold robins, which have recently left their nests, and apparently indicate their locality to their parents by thus incessantly peeping all day long.

Observed to-night a yellow wasps' (?) nest, made of the same kind of paper with the hornets', in horizontal strips, some brownish, some white. It was broad

[1] Wool-grass.

cone-shape, some two inches in its smallest diameter, with a hole at the apex beneath about one half inch [in] diameter, and was suspended to the sheathing overhead within the recess at Mrs. Brown's front door. She was afraid of the wasps, and so I brushed it off for her. It was apparently the same kind of nest that I observed first a few days since, of the same size, under the peak of our roof, just over my chamber windows. (The last is now five inches in diameter, July 7th.) It contained only one comb about one and one eighth inches in diameter suspended from above, and this was surrounded by about two thin coverings of paper an eighth of an inch or more apart. The wasps looked at first like bees, with yellow rings on the abdomen. The cells contain what look and move like white grubs.

(July 7th, watching the nest over my window, I see that the wasps are longer than honey-bees and have a white place between the abdomen and breast. There are commonly three or four visible at once about the nest, and they are continually bringing down new layers of paper from the top about a sixth of an inch distant from the last, building downward on all sides at once evenly and beginning, or starting, a new one before they have finished the first.[1] They have turned the entrance a little outward; *i. e.*, have built the successive layers a little over its inner side, *i. e.* that toward the house, so that it partly faces outward. They are continually arriving and departing, and one or two commonly are at work at once on the edge of the

[1] July 14, these new layers are coming down like new leaves, investing it.

new curtain or layer. What becomes of the first layers surrounding the comb within? Do they steadily cut them away and use them on the outside, and build new and larger combs beneath? Some that come forth appear to have something white like the paper in their mouths, at any rate.)

There is one in Mr. Smith's bank, one side open and flat against the ground. One of his men thinks they will not sting him if he holds his breath.

June 29. A. M. — Up Assabet with Blake.

Allium Canadense in house and probably in field.[1] The river is now whitened with the down of the black willow, and I am surprised to see a minute plant abundantly springing from its midst and greening it, — where it has collected in denser beds against some obstacle as a branch on the surface, — like grass growing in cotton in a tumbler.[2]

P. M. — Walk to Lee's Cliff.

Small rough sunflower, the common, at Bittern Cliff. Where I took shelter under the rock at Lee's Cliff, a phœbe has built her nest, and it now has five eggs in it, nearly fresh.

June 30. A. M. — To Ball's Hill.

Yesterday afternoon it was remarkably cool, with

[1] Possibly earlier in field, for I find it all withered there July 7th, though none visibly out before, — as if frost-bitten even.

[2] It is the young willow. *Vide* July 9th. On July 7th I see scarcely any left on the water. June 26, 1860.

wind, it being *easterly*, and I anticipated a sea-turn. There was a little, a blue mistiness, ere long. The coolness continues, and this morning the sky is full of clouds, but they look to me like dog-day clouds and not rain-threatening. It does not rain.

XII

JULY, 1857

(ÆT. 39–40)

July 2. P. M. — To Gowing's Swamp.

Flannery says that there was a frost this morning in Moore's Swamp on the Bedford road, where he has potatoes. He observed something white on the potatoes about 3.30 A. M. and, stooping, breathed on and melted it. Minott says he has known a frost every month in the year, but at this season it would be a *black* frost, which bites harder than a white one.

The *Gaylussacia dumosa* var. *hirtella*, not yet quite in prime. This is commonly an inconspicuous bush, eight to twelve inches high, half prostrate over the sphagnum in which it grows, together with the andromedas, European cranberry, etc., etc., but sometimes twenty inches high quite on the edge of the swamp. It has a very large and peculiar bell-shaped flower, with prominent *ribs* and a rosaceous tinge, and is not to be mistaken for the edible huckleberry or blueberry blossom. The flower deserves a more particular description than Gray gives it. But Bigelow says well of its corolla that it is "remarkable for its distinct, five angled form." Its segments are a little recurved. The calyx-segments are acute and pink at last; the racemes, elongated, about one inch long, one-sided; the

corolla, narrowed at the mouth, but very wide above; the calyx, with its segments, pedicels, and the whole raceme (and indeed the leaves somewhat), glandular-hairy.

Calla palustris (with its convolute point like the cultivated) at the south end of Gowing's Swamp. Having found this in one place, I now find it in another. Many an object is not seen, though it falls within the range of our visual ray, because it does not come within the range of our intellectual ray, *i. e.*, we are not looking for it. So, in the largest sense, we find only the world we look for.

I hear many Maryland yellow-throats about the edge of this swamp, and even [?] near their nests. Indeed, I find one or two old ones *suspended much like a red-wing's* amid the water andromeda. They are quite small and of such material as *this* bird chooses.

I see amid the *Andromeda Polifolia* pure bright crimson leaves, and, looking closely, find that in many instances one branch, affected by a kind of disease, bears very handsome light-crimson leaves, two or three times as wide as usual, of the usual white color beneath, which contrast strangely with the slender green and glaucous ones on the contiguous branches. The water andromeda has similar crimson leaves, only proportionally larger and coarser, showing the dots. These are very common. Those of the *Polifolia* far more delicate.

Pogonia ophioglossoides apparently in a day or two.

July 3. Minott says that old Joe Merriam used to tell of his shooting black ducks in the Dam meadows

and what luck he had. One day he had shot a couple of ducks and was bringing them home by the legs, when he came to a ditch. As he had his gun in the other hand, and the ditch was wide, he thought he would toss the ducks over before he jumped, but they had no sooner struck the ground than they picked themselves up and flew away, which discouraged him with respect to duck-shooting.

M. says that my pool in Gowing's Swamp used to be called Duck Pond, though he does not know of ducks settling there. Perhaps they did anciently. He once fell into a deep hole when going after blueberries in the town (?) swamp beyond his own meadow. He stepped on to some "water-brush" (probably water andromeda), and suddenly sank very deep, spraining his hand, which he put out to save himself. He once killed a black duck in Beck Stow's Swamp, but could not get it on account of the water. Somebody else got a boat and got it. Thus the ducks and geese will frequent a swamp where there is considerable water, in the spring.

Minott was sitting in his shed as usual, while his handsome pullets were perched on the wood within two feet of him, the rain having driven them to this shelter.

There always were poor and rich as now, — in that first year when our ancestors lived on pumpkins and raccoons, as now when flour is imported from the West.

July 4. P. M. — Up Assabet with Brown and Rogers. Saw many pickerel near the boat. At length, near

the upper Assabet bath place, I observed, "Stop! Was that a big pickerel we just passed?" for it was so large I could hardly believe my eyes and thought it must have been a stake. We dropped back and found it to be a pickerel, which apparently would weigh four pounds, and it appeared slightly wounded about the head. We struck him three times with a paddle, and once he nearly jumped into the boat, but at last we could not find him. It seemed out of proportion to the small stream. We ought to have used a pointed or hooked stick to secure him; might have hooked him under the gills. I have heard of small fishes being caught in a slip-noose of grass. Close by I detected in the weeds the back of a large mud turtle exposed and, after ascertaining which end was his tail, — for he lay perfectly still, — I took him into the boat. His back was singularly gibbous or bulged up, he having been evidently wounded once. His approach and aspect drove my companions to the end of the boat.

To-day is warm again, but for nearly a week many people have sat by a fire.

July 5. A. M. — To Lee's Cliff by boat.

Potentilla arguta abundantly out. Partridges big as quails. At Clamshell I found three arrowheads and a small Indian chisel for my guests. Rogers determined the rate of the boat's progress by observing by his second-hand how long the boat was going its length past a pad, calling the boat's length so much.

For some days I have seen great numbers of blackish spiny caterpillars stripping the black willows, some

full-grown on June 30th and some now not more than three quarters of an inch long. When looking at a blackbird's nest I pricked my hand smartly on them several times; in fact the nest was pretty well protected by this *chevaux-de-frise*. Are they the caterpillars of the *Vanessa Antiopa?* [1]

That new ravine at Clamshell is so enlarged that bank swallows already use its sides, and I feel some young there. After leaving my companions at the Lee Bridge road, I pushed up Well Meadow Brook a few rods, through the weeds. I saw by the commotion that great numbers of fishes fled before me and concealed themselves amid the weeds or in the mud. The mud was all stirred up by them. Some ran partly ashore. Higher up, when I had left the boat and walked up the brook on the quaking shore, I found a bay and pool connected with the brook all alive with them, and observed two or three caught partly high and dry by their heedless haste, in a shallow and very weedy place. These were young pickerel two or three inches long. I suspect that all, or the greater part, were pickerel, and that they commonly breed in such still weedy basins in deep muddy meadows.

Comara palustris apparently in prime.

A phœbe's nest with four eggs half hatched, at stone bridge.

There has been, amid the chips where a wood-pile stood, in our yard, a bumblebee's nest for ten days or more. Near it there was what I should have called a mouse's nest of withered grass, but this was mainly

[1] Yes; according to Harris's description, they are.

of different material and *perhaps* was made by the bee. It was a little heap two inches high, six long, and four wide, made of old withered grass and *small bits* of rags, brown paper, cotton-wool, strings, lint, and whole feathers, with a small half-closed hole at one end, at which the [bee] buzzed and showed himself if you touched the nest. I saw the cat putting out her paw there and starting back, and to-day I find the remains, apparently, of the bee dead at the entrance. On opening, I find nothing in the nest.

There came out this morning, apparently from one of those hard *stem-wound* cocoons on a black birch in my window, a moth whose wings are spread four and a quarter inches, and it is about an inch and three quarters long. It is black, wings and body, with two short, broad feathery antennæ. The wings all have a clay-colored border behind, with a distinct black waving line down the middle of it, and, about midway the wings, a less distinct clay-colored line. Near the point of each forward wing, a round black spot or eye, with a bluish crescent within its forward edge, and beyond this spot, a purple tinge with a short whitish waving line continued through it from the crescent. The rear wings have a row of oblong roundish black spots along the clay-colored border, within the black line. There is a very faint light line on the fore wings on each side of the head. Beneath, on wings and body, dark purplish brown takes the place of the black above. It is rather handsomer and higher-colored beneath than above. There is a very small light or clay-colored triangular spot near the middle of wing beneath; also a

row of brown spots on a white band along each side of the body. This is evidently the male *Attacus Promethea*. The rich purplish brown beneath — a sort of chocolate purple — makes the figure of a smaller moth of different form.

The cocoon, about an inch long, is surrounded by the now pale withered leaf of the birch, which is wrapped almost quite around it and extends beneath, and it is very hard and firm, the light silk being wound thickly about the petiole, and also, afterward, the twig itself for half an inch or more both above and beneath the petiole. Sometimes there is no real petiole for a core, but the silky sheath can be slid up and down the twig.

July 6. *Rubus triflorus* well ripe. The beach plums have everywhere the crescent-shaped mark made by the curculio, — the few that remain on.

July 7. Some of the inhabitants of the Cape think that the Cape is theirs and all occupied by them, but in my eyes it is no more theirs than it is the blackbirds', and in visiting the Cape there is hardly more need of my regarding or going through the villages than of going through the blackbirds' nests. I am inclined to leave them both on one side, or perchance I just glance into them to see how they are built and what they contain. I know that they have *spoken for* the whole Cape, and lines are drawn on their maps accordingly, but I know that these are imaginary, having perambulated many such, and they would have to get me or one of

my craft to find them for them. For the most part, indeed with very trifling exceptions, there were no human beings there, only a few imaginary lines on a map.

July 8. P. M. — To Laurel Glen.

A chewink's nest with four young just hatched, at the bottom of the pyrola hollow and grove, where it is so dry, about seven feet southwest of a white pine.

Counted the rings of a white pine stump, sawed off last winter at Laurel Glen. It was three and a half feet [in] diameter and has one hundred and twenty-six rings. *Chimaphila umbellata*, apparently a day or two. I find the *Pyrola secunda* only on the point of expanding. Hear apparently redstarts there, — so they must have nests near, — also pine warblers and *till tilts*.

Later. — To Gowing's Swamp.

The *Gaylussacia dumosa* is now in prime at least. The drosera, round and spatulate leafed, is very abundant and handsome on the sphagnum in the open spaces, amid the *Andromeda calyculata* and *Polifolia*. Find a *Pogonia ophioglossoides* with a third leaf and second flower an inch above the first flower.

Edith Emerson shows me *Oldenlandia purpurea* var. *longifolia*, which she saw very abundantly in bloom on the Blue Hills (Bigelow's locality) on the 29th of June. Says she has seen the pine-sap this year in Concord.

July 9. Could see no yellow wasps about the nest over my window at 6 A. M., but did just before 6.30.[1] I hear of still a second nest at Mrs. Brown's and one at Julius Smith's.

Another *Attacus Promethea*, a male from the same young black birch, was out and on the window this morning. *Q. v.* I dipped the *body* into alcohol before it had fairly spread its wings, but so discolored it, *i. e.* the white line with dots on the side of the abdomen.

I see that the seeds of the *Salix nigra* gathered on the catkins on the 7th, or two days since, put in tumblers of water in my window, have already germinated! and show those two little roundish green leaves.

P. M. — Up Assabet with Sophia.

There is now but little black willow down left on the trees. They will be handsomest somewhat later than this, when there is no down on them, and the new growth has more invested the stems. I think I see how this tree is propagated by its seeds. Its countless minute brown seeds, just perceptible to the naked eye in the midst of their cotton, are wafted with the cotton to the water, — most abundantly about a fortnight ago, — and there they drift and form a thick white scum together with other matter, especially against some alder or other fallen or drooping shrub where there is less current than usual. There, within two or three days, a great many germinate and show their two little roundish leaves, more or less tingeing with green the surface of the scum, — somewhat like grass

[1] *Vide* 10th.

seed in a tumbler of cotton. Many of these are drifted in amid the button-bushes, willows, and other shrubs, and the sedge, along the riverside, and the water falling just at this time, when they have put forth little fibres, they are deposited on the mud just left bare in the shade, and thus probably a great many of them have a chance to become perfect plants. But if they do not drift into sufficiently shallow water and are not left on the mud just at the right time, probably they perish. The mud in many such places is now green with them, though perhaps the seed has often *blown directly through the air* to such places.

I am surprised to see dense groves of young maples an inch or more high from seed of this year. They have sprung in pure sand, where the seed has been drifted and moisture enough supplied at the water's edge. The seed (now effete) commonly lies on the surface, having sent down its rootlet into the sand.

I see no flowers on the bass trees by this river this year, nor at Conantum.

Am surprised to find how much carburetted hydrogen gas there is in the beds of sawdust by the side of this stream, as at the "Narrows." If I thrust in my paddle and give it a twist, great bubbles two inches or more in diameter rush up with great force and sound, lifting the water an inch or two, as if it were violently boiling, and filling the air with that strong gunpowder scent. The bubbles, being lighter than atmospheric air, burst at once, and give me [no] opportunity to see myself in them, as those which the boat makes in sluggish water.

July 10. Put some more black willow seed in a tumbler of water at 9.30 A. M.

P. M. — To Pratt's and Peter's.

One flower on the *Solanum nigrum* at Pratt's, which he says opened the 7th. He found, about a week ago, the *Botrychium Virginianum* in bloom, about the bass in Fever-bush Swamp.[1] I see some lupine still in bloom, though many pods have been ripe some time.

The tephrosia, which grows by Peter's road in the woods, is a very striking and interesting, if I may not say beautiful, flower, especially when, as here, it is seen in a cool and shady place, its clear rose purple contrasting very agreeably with yellowish white, rising from amidst a bed of finely pinnate leaves. Bigelow calls the flowers "very beautiful."

At evening I watch to see when my yellow wasps cease working. For some time before sunset there are but few seen going and coming, but for some time after, or as long as I could easily see them ten feet off, I saw one go forth or return from time to time.

July 11. P. M. — To Corner Spring and Cliffs.

Haying is fairly begun, and for some days I have heard the sound of the mowing-machine, and now the lark must look out for the mowers. The flowering fern, which is so much larger in the copses, though much is brown and effete, is still perhaps in prime. *Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum* ripe. Their dark blue with a bloom is a color that surprises me. The cymbidium is really a splendid flower, with its spike two or three inches long,

[1] *Done* on the 13th.

of commonly three or five large, irregular, concave, star-shaped purple flowers, amid the cool green meadow-grass. It has an agreeable fragrance withal. I see more berries than usual of the *Rubus triflorus* in the open meadow near the southeast corner of the Hubbard meadow blueberry swamp. Call it, perhaps, Cymbidium Meadow. They are dark shining red and, when ripe, of a very agreeable flavor and somewhat of the raspberry's *spirit*. Petty morel not yet, by the bars this side Corner Spring; nor is the helianthus there budded yet. *Apocynum cannabinum*, with its *small white* flowers and *narrow* sepals half as long as whole corolla, apparently two or three days. The trumpet-weed is already as high as my head, with a rich glaucous bloom on its stem. Indeed, looking off into the vales from Fair Haven Hill, where a thin blue haze now rests almost universally, I see that the earth itself is invested with a glaucous bloom at this season like some fruits and rapidly growing stems.

Thermometer at 93° + this afternoon.

Am surprised to find the water of Corner Spring spoiled for the present, however much I clear it out, by the numbers of dead and dying frogs in it (*Rana palustris*). There is a mortality among [them] which has made them hop to this spring to die.

There is an abundance of corydalis on the top of the Cliffs, but most of it is generally out of bloom, *i. e.* excepting a twig or two, and it is partly withered, not so fresh as that in our garden; but some in the shade is quite green and fresh and abundantly blooming still.

July 12. P. M. — To *Equisetum hyemale.*

Those little minnows, a third or half inch long or more, which I catch when bathing, hovering over open sandy spaces, as here at Clamshell, appear to be little shiners. When left dry on my hand, they can toss themselves three or four inches with a spring of their tails, and so often get into the water again. Small as they are, it is rather difficult to catch them, they dodge your hands so fast.

I drink at every cooler spring in my walk these afternoons and love to eye the bottom there, with its pebbly caddis-cases, or its white worms, or perchance a luxurious frog cooling himself next my nose. Sometimes the farmer, foreseeing haying, has been prudent enough to sink a tub in one, which secures a clear deep space. It would be worth the while, methinks, to make a map of the town with all the good springs on it, indicating whether they were cool, perennial, copious, pleasantly located, etc. The farmer is wont to celebrate the virtues of some one on his own farm above all others. Some cool rills in the meadows should be remembered also, for some such in deep, cold, grassy meadows are as cold as springs. I have sometimes drank warm or foul water, not knowing such cold streams were at hand. By many a spring I know where to look for the dipper or glass which some mower has left. When a spring has been allowed to fill up, to be muddied by cattle, or, being exposed to the sun by cutting down the trees and bushes, to dry up, it affects me sadly, like an institution going to decay. Sometimes I see, on one side the tub, — the tub overhung with

various wild plants and flowers, its edge almost completely concealed even from the searching eye, — the white sand freshly cast up where the spring is bubbling in. Often I sit patiently by the spring I have cleaned out and deepened with my hands, and see the foul water rapidly dissipated like a curling vapor and giving place to the cool and clear. Sometimes I can look a yard or more into a crevice under a rock, toward the sources of a spring in a hillside, and see it come cool and copious with incessant murmuring down to the light. There are few more refreshing sights in hot weather.

I find many strawberries deep in the grass of the meadow near this Hosmer Spring; then proceed on my way with reddened and fragrant fingers, till it gets washed off at new springs. It is always pleasant to go over the bare brow of Lupine Hill and see the river and meadows thence. It is exceedingly sultry this afternoon, and few men are abroad. The cows stand up to their bellies in the river, lashing their sides with their tails from time to time.

A strong and wholesome fragrance now from the vegetation as I go by overgrown paths through the swamp west of Nut Meadow. *Equisetum hyemale* has been out a good while; is mostly effete, but some open yet. Some have several flower-spikes on the sides near the top, but most one at top, of the last year's plant. This year's shoots a foot high, more or less. All the *Pyrola secunda* I can find is out of bloom. The *Chimaphila umbellata* flower-*buds* make a very pretty umbel, of half a dozen small purple balls surmounted by

a green calyx. They contrast prettily with the glossy green leaves.

A song sparrow's nest in a small clump of alder, two feet from ground! Three or four eggs.

I hear the occasional *link* note from the earliest bobolinks of the season, — a day or two.

July 13. Very hot weather.

P. M. — To Rattlesnake Fern Swamp.

I hear before I start the distant mutterings of thunder in the northwest, though I see no cloud. The haymakers are busy raking their hay, to be ready for a shower. They would rather have their grass wet a little than not have the rain. I keep on, regardless of the prospect. See the indigo-bird still, chirping anxiously on the bushes in that sprout-land beyond the red huckleberry. *Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum* berries pretty thick there, and one lass is picking them with a dipper tied to her girdle. The first thought is, What a good school this lass goes to! Rattlesnake fern just done.

I make haste home, expecting a thunder-shower, which we need, but it goes by. The grass by the roadside is burnt yellow and is quite dusty. This, with the sultry air, the parched fields, and the languid inhabitants, marks the season. Already the elms with denser foliage begin to hang dark against the glaucous mist.

The price of friendship is the total surrender of yourself; no lesser kindness, no ordinary attentions and offerings will buy it. There is forever that purchase to be made with that wealth which you possess, yet only once in a long while are you *advertised* of such a

commodity. I sometimes awake in the night and think of friendship and its possibilities, a new life and revelation to me, which perhaps I had not experienced for many months. Such transient thoughts have been my nearest approach to realization of it, thoughts which I know of no one to communicate to. I suddenly erect myself in my thoughts, or find myself erected, infinite degrees above the possibility of ordinary endeavors, and see for what grand stakes the game of life may be played. Men, with their indiscriminate attentions and ceremonious good-will, offer you trivial baits, which do not tempt; they are not serious enough either for success or failure. I wake up in the night to these higher levels of life, as to a day that begins to dawn, as if my intervening life had been a long night. I catch an echo of the great strain of Friendship played somewhere, and feel compensated for months and years of commonplace. I rise into a diviner atmosphere, in which simply to exist and breathe is a triumph, and my thoughts inevitably tend toward the grand and infinite, as aeronauts report that there is ever an upper current hereabouts which sets toward the ocean. If they rise high enough they go out to sea, and behold the vessels seemingly in mid-air like themselves. It is as if I were serenaded, and the highest and truest compliments were paid me. The universe gives me three cheers.

Friendship is the fruit which the year should bear; it lends its fragrance to the flowers, and it is in vain if we get only a large crop of apples without it. This experience makes us unavailable for the ordinary cour-

tesy and intercourse of men. We can only recognize them when they rise to that level and realize our dream.

July 14. P. M. — Up Assabet with Loomis and Wilde.

Set fire to the carburetted hydrogen from the sawdust shoal with matches, and heard it flash. It must be an interesting sight by night.

July 15. Tephrosia is generally considerably past its prime. *Vaccinium vacillans* berries. Scare up a snipe (?) by riverside, which goes off with a dry *crack*, and afterward two woodcocks in the shady alder marsh at Well Meadow, which go off with a whistling flight. *Rhus glabra* under Cliffs, not yet.

When I entered the woods there, I was at once pursued by a swarm of those wood flies which gyrate around your head and strike your hat like rain-drops. As usual, they kept up with me as I walked, and gyrated about me still, as if I were stationary, advancing at the same time and receiving reinforcements from time to time. Though I switched them smartly for half a mile with some indigo-weed, they did not mind it in the least, nor a better switch of *Salix tristis;* but though I knocked down many of them, they soon picked themselves up and came on again. They had a large black spot on their wings and some yellowish rings about their abdomens. They keep up a smart buzzing all the while. When I descended into the swamp at Well Meadow, they deserted me, but soon pursued me again when I came out. Apparently the same swarm fol-

lowed me quite through the wood (with this exception), or for two miles, and they did not leave me till I had got some twenty rods from the woods toward Hayden's. They did not once sting, though they endeavored sometimes to alight on my face. What they got by their perseverance I do not know, — unless it were a switching.

July 16. *Thursday*. P. M. — To Hemlocks.

Geum album, apparently well out.

As I walked through the pasture side of the hill, saw a mouse or two glance before me in faint galleries in the grass. They are seldom seen, for these small deer, like the larger, disappear suddenly, as if they had exploded before your eyes.

Lechea thymifolia of Gray is the large-podded one according to plate in his "Genera." G., in same, shows five petals to *Portulaca* and says it "has from early times been naturalized around gardens almost everywhere . . . is said to be truly wild in Arkansas and Texas."

I hear of the first early blueberries brought to market. What a variety of rich blues their berries present, *i. e.* the earliest kind! Some are quite black and without bloom. What innocent flavors!

July 17. P. M. — To Lee's Cliff.

The young leaves of the slippery elm are a yellowish green and large, and the branches recurved or drooping. *Hypericum corymbosum*. Am caught in the rain and take shelter under the thick white pine

by Lee's Cliff. I see thereunder an abundance of chimaphila in bloom. It is a beautiful flower, with its naked umbel of crystalline purplish-white flowers, their disks at an angle with the horizon. On its lower side a ring of purple (or crimson) scales at the base of its concave petals, around the large, green, sticky ovary.

The *Sagina procumbens* continues to flower sparingly. It agrees with Gray's plate.

I found yesterday, at and above the Hemlocks on the Assabet, the dicksonia, apparently in prime; *Aspidium Noveboracense; Aspidium marginale*, apparently in prime; *Osmunda Claytoniana* and *cinnamomea*, done.

I find to-day, at Bittern Cliff and at Lee's, *Asplenium ebeneum* (the larger), apparently nearly in prime, and *A. Trichomanes*, apparently just begun. This very commonly occurs in tufts at the base of the last, like radical leaves to it. At Lee's Cliff, *Polypodium vulgare*, not yet brown fruit. *Aspidium Noveboracense* at Corner Spring, not yet brown; also *Aspidium Filix-fœmina* (?), with lunar-shaped fruit, not yet brown; also apparently a chaffy-stemmed dicksonia, densely brown-fruited; also an almost thrice pinnate fern with a very chaffy stipe, in prime, already yellowish above, somewhat *A. cristatum*-like, some of the dots confluent.

Ampelopsis out of bloom at Lee's. *Aralia racemosa*, not in bloom, at Corner Spring.

July 18. Minott says that old Sam Nutting used to pinch off the first leaves of his melon vines as soon as

they had three or four leaves, because they only attracted the bugs, and he was quite successful.

George Bradford says he finds in Salem striped maple and *Sambucus pubens*. He (and Tuckerman?) found the *Utricularia resupinata* once in Plymouth, and it seems to correspond with mine at Well Meadow.

July 19. Smooth sumach out since the 16th.

July 20. TO BOSTON ON WAY TO MAINE WOODS.

At Natural History Library. Holbrook makes the *Emys terrapin* to be found from Rhode Island to Florida and South America. "The only Emys common to North and South America." So did not know it was found at New Bedford. Was not my Freetown turtle (*vide* April 13th) Holbrook's *Kinosternon Pennsylvanicum?* In his plate the edges of the scales are of more *waving* lines than those of the *Sternothœrus;* it has more brown or reddish yellow both above and below; its tail appears more sharply horny. There is no yellow line on its neck. The sternum is considerably larger (in proportion to carapax) as well as broader behind, and the plates connecting it with the upper shell are much wider. In the generic account the difference from the *Sternothœrus* is that the jaws are hooked (I see no difference in the plates) and the "sternum subdivided into three sections, anterior and posterior movable;" and the "supplemental plates very large." Under this species he says the shell is "ecarinate;" "vertebral plates depressed, sub-imbricate." "Length of shell, $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches; breadth of shell, 2 inches 10 lines;

elevation, $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches; length of sternum, 3 inches 2 lines." "The living animal has a slight odour of musk that is not disagreeable." Found in Atlantic States from Florida to latitude 41°. Thinks Hitchcock mistook it for *Sternothærus* in his Geology. Found in the West, and Say says, high up the Missouri.

According to De Kay, it is found sparingly in the southern counties of New York, and he says, "It has a strong musky smell." Of the *Sternothærus* he says, "There appear to be two varieties, of which one is smooth on the shell, while the other is sub-carinate." Length of shell of *Sternothærus*, $2\frac{5}{10}$ inches; height, $1\frac{2}{10}$; of *Kinosternon*, 4 and $1\frac{8}{10}$. (*Vide* April 13th.)

De Kay does not describe the *Cistuda Blandingii* as found in New York.

5 P. M. — Take cars for Portland. Very hot and dusty; as much need of a veil in the cars to exclude cinders as in the woods to keep off mosquitoes. Riding in the cars this weather like sitting in the flue of a chimney.

Take steamer at Portland. Delayed by fog in night off coast of Maine.[1]

July 21. *Tuesday.* 1 P. M. At Bangor. — Thatcher's moose-horns hanging in his barn spread two feet eight inches. There is one more prong on one side than the other. This is small.

[1] [The account of this journey appears in *The Maine Woods* under the title of " The Allegash and East Branch." In the following pages only those passages of the Journal which were not reproduced in that account are included.]

July 22. Wednesday. I am struck by the appearance of large canoe birch trees, even about houses, as an ornamental tree, and they are very enlivening, their trunks white as if whitewashed, though they rarely escape being barked and so disfigured more or less by mischievous fingers. Their white boles are in keeping with the fresh, cool air.

At a mile and a half north of Bangor, passed the spot, at Treat's Falls, where the first settler and fur-trader, one Treat, lived. . . .

We wanted to get one [1] who was temperate and reliable, an older man than we had before, well skilled in Indian lore. I was warned not to employ an Indian on account of their obstinacy and the difficulty of understanding one another, and on account of their dirty habits in cooking, etc., but it was partly the Indian, such as he was, that I had come to see. The difficulty is to find one who will not get drunk and detain you wherever liquor is to be had. Some young white men of Oldtown named Pond were named as the very ones for us. But I was bent on having an Indian at any rate.

While we were talking with Polis, a young, very dark-complexioned Indian, named something like Nicholai Orson, came up, and Polis said, "He go with you." We found that the latter wanted to go very much, said he knew the country and all about it. But I said, "We don't know you." He was too dark-colored, as if with African blood, — P. said they did not mix with them, — and too young for me. While I was

[1] [An Indian guide.]

talking with him, Thatcher [1] took Polis aside and inquired the other's character, when P. frankly told him that he would n't do for us at all, that he was a very good fellow except that he would get drunk whenever he had a chance. . . . T. said he would get away from Nicholai with as few words as possible. So T. saying to N. that if we wanted him we would call again in a couple of hours, we departed.[2] . . .

A *light* india-rubber coat is useful, but you cannot work in it in warm weather, for your underclothes will be just as wet with perspiration as if dipped in water before you know it, and, beside, I wore off the rubber against the cross-bars behind my back. You could not wear india-rubber pants in addition unless you sat perfectly still in cool weather.

The only india-rubber bags we could find in Bangor were no better than a canvas bag, the rubber rapidly cracking and peeling off, letting in water and dirtying the contents. They would have been an imposition if the seller had not admitted that they would not hold water, and asserted that he could not make one that would. Doubted; far better ones could be home-made of good india-rubber cloth.

Called on a Mr. Coe, part proprietor (?) of the Chamberlain Farm, so called, on Chamberlain Lake (spoke of it as "our farm"), who gave us some advice as to our outfit. Said he should like to have the making up of our packs, thinking we should take too

[1] [Mr. Thatcher of Bangor was Thoreau's companion on his Chesuncook excursion in 1853.]

[2] [Joe Polis was the Indian finally engaged for the expedition.]

many things. Told of one who, having to *walk* a few days through the woods, began by loading himself with some fifteen pounds of shot. The rule is to carry as little as possible. Advised us to go on foot, carry but few supplies, and replenish at the different camps we might find. He hastily scribbled this memorandum for us: —

"Axe
Canoe
Blankets
Fry-pan
Teakettle
Dippers
Tea
Salt
Hard-bread and pork
Pepper
Matches
Ammunition and lines and hooks
Camphor"

July 23. *Thursday.* Some fifteen caribou were taken by one (?) man about Moosehead last winter. . . .

[Mr. Leonard, of Bangor, a sportsman,] said that the horns of a moose would spread four feet, sometimes six; would weigh thirty or forty pounds (the hide, fifty); squirrels and mice ate the horns when shed. (They told me that the horns were not grown at this season.) . . . [Leonard told] also of some panthers which appeared near a house in Foxcroft. . . .

I observed from the stage many of the *Fringilla hyemalis* flitting along the fences, even at this season, whence I conclude that they must breed here. Also,

between Monson and the lake, the now very handsome panicles of the red elder-berry, so much earlier than the black, the most showy objects by the roadside. In one place the tree-cranberry in a yard, already *reddening*, though nowhere else after was it nearly so early. . . .

There were two public houses near together,[1] and they wanted to detain us at the first, even took off some of our baggage in spite of us; but, on our protesting, shouted, "Let them go! let them go!" as if it was any of their business. Whereupon we, thanking them for the privilege, rode on, leaving P. behind, who, I knew, would follow his canoe. Here we found a spacious house, quite empty, close to the lake, with an attentive landlord, which was what we wanted. A bright wood fire soon burned in the ample barroom, very comfortable in that fresh and cool atmosphere, and we congratulated ourselves on having escaped the crowd at the other house.

Fogg, the landlord, said that there was scarcely any hemlock about the lake. Here was an Indian who came to talk with Polis, who made canoes, had made those two for Leonard. . . . He said that he used the red cedar of uplands (*i. e.* arbor-vitæ?) for ribs, etc.

July 24. Friday. As we paddled along, we saw many peetweets, also the common iris or blue flag, along the rocky shore, and here and afterwards great fields of epilobium or fire-weed, a mass of color. . . .

P. said that *Bematinichtik* meant high land generally and no particular height. . . .

[1] [At Moosehead Lake.]

Near this island, or rather some miles southwest of it, on the mainland, where we stopped to stretch our legs and look at the vegetation, I measured a canoe birch, five and a half feet in circumference at two and a half from the ground. . . .

I was disappointed to find my clothes under my india-rubber coat as completely wetted by perspiration as they could have been by rain, and that this would always be the consequence of *working* in such a garment, at least in warm weather. . . .

We looked down on the unpretending buildings and grounds of the Kineo House, as on a little flat map, oblong-square, at our feet. . . .

It [1] suggested to me how unexplored still are the realms of nature, that what we know and have seen is always an insignificant portion. We may any day take a walk as strange as Dante's imaginary one to L' Inferno or Paradiso.

July 25. Saturday. Very early this morning we heard the note of the wood thrush, on awaking, though this was a poor singer. I was glad to find that this prince of singers was so common in the wilderness. . . .

The shores of this lake are rocky, rarely sandy, and we saw no good places for moose to come out on, *i. e.* no meadows. What P. called Caucomgomoc Mountain, with a double top, was seen north over the lake in mid-forenoon. Approaching the shore, we scared up some young dippers with the old bird. Like the

[1] [Phosphorescent wood. See *Maine Woods*, pp. 198–201; Riv. 245–248.]

shecorways, they ran over the water very fast. Landing on the east side, four or five miles north of Kineo, I noticed roses (*R. nitida*) in bloom, and, as usual, an abundance of rue (*Thalictrum Cornuti*) along the shore. The wood there was arbor-vitæ, spruce, fir, white pine, etc. The ground and rotting trunks, as usual, covered with mosses, some strange kinds, — various wild feather and leaf-like mosses, of rank growth, that were new or rare to me, — and an abundance of *Clintonia borealis*. . . .

The Indian started off first with the canoe and was soon out of sight, going much faster than an ordinary walk. We could see him a mile or more ahead, when his canoe against the sky on the height of land between Moosehead and the Penobscot was all that was to be seen about him. . . .

Here, among others, were the *Aster Radula*, just in bloom; large-flowered bellwort (*Uvularia grandiflora*), in fruit. The great purple orchis (*Platanthera fimbriata*), very splendid and perfect ones close to the rails. I was surprised to see it in bloom so late. *Vaccinium Canadense; Dalibarda repens*, still in bloom; *Pyrola secunda*, out of bloom; *Oxalis Acetosella*, still occasionally in flower; Labrador tea (*Ledum latifolium*), out of bloom; *Kalmia glauca*, etc., etc., close to the track.

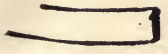
A cousin of mine and his son met with a large male moose on this carry two years ago, standing within a few rods of them, and at first mistook him for an ox. They both fired at him, but to no purpose.

As we were returning over the track where I had passed but a few moments before, we started a par-

tridge with her young partly from beneath the wooden rails. While the young hastened away, she sat within seven feet of us and plumed herself, perfectly fearless, without making a noise or ruffling her feathers as they do in our neighborhood, and I thought it would be a good opportunity to observe whether she flew as quietly as other birds when not alarmed. We observed her till we were tired, and when we compelled her to get out of our way, though she took to wing as easily as if we had not been there and went only two or three rods, into a tree, she flew with a considerable *whir*, as if this were unavoidable in a rapid motion of the wings. . . .

Here was a canoe on the stocks, in an earlier stage of its manufacture than I had seen before, and I noticed it particularly. The St. Francis Indian was paring down the long cedar strips, or lining, with his crooked knife.

As near as I could *see*, and *understand* him and Polis, they first lay the bark flat on the ground, outside up, and two of the top rails, the inside and thickest ones, already connected with cross-bars, upon it, in order to get the form; and, with logs and rocks to keep the bark in place, they bend up the birch, cutting down slits in the edges from within three feet of the ends and perpendicularly on all sides about the rails, making a square corner at the ground; and a row of stakes three feet high is then driven into the ground all around, to hold the bark up in its place. They next lift the frame, *i. e.* two rails connected by cross-bars, to the proper height, and sew the bark strongly to the rails with spruce roots every six inches, the thread passing

around the rail and also *through* the ends of the cross-bars, and sew on strips of bark to protect the sides in the middle. The canoe is as yet carried out square down at the ends (not ), and is perfectly flat on the bottom. (This canoe had advanced thus far.)

Then, as near as I could learn, they shape the ends (?), put in all the lining of long thin strips, so shaped and shaved as just to fit, and fill up the bark, pressing it out and shaping the canoe. Then they put in the ribs and put on the outer or thinnest rail over the edge of the bark. . . .

Our path up the bank here led by a large dead white pine, in whose trunk near the ground were great square-cornered holes made by the woodpeckers, probably the red-headed. They were seven or eight inches long by four wide and reached to the heart of the tree through an inch or more of sound wood, and looked like great mortise-holes whose corners had been somewhat worn and rounded by a loose tenon. The tree for some distance was quite honeycombed by them. It suggested woodpeckers on a larger scale than ours, as were the trees and the forest.[1] . . .

Returning, we found the tree cranberry in one place still in bloom. The stream here ran very swiftly and was hard to paddle against.

July 26. *Sunday.* I distinguished more plainly than formerly the very sharp and regular dark tops of the fir trees, shaped like the points of bodkins. These give a

[1] [The holes were doubtless the work of the pileated woodpecker.]

peculiarly dark and sombre look to the forest. The spruce-top has a more ragged outline. . . .

Here were many raspberries on the site of an old logging-camp, but not yet ripe. . . .

In the meanwhile I observed the plants on the shore: white and black spruce, *Hypericum ellipticum*, *Smilax herbacea*, sium, and a strange-looking polygonum. . . .

As we sat on the bank, two canoes, containing men, women, and children, probably from Chesuncook, returned down the stream. We supposed that they had been a-berrying this Sunday morning. . . .

The canoe implies a long antiquity in which its manufacture has been gradually perfected. It will ere long, perhaps, be ranked among the lost arts. . . .

July 27. *Monday.* There were some yellow lilies (*Nuphar*), *Scutellaria galericulata*, clematis (abundant), sweet-gale, "great smilacina" (did I mean *S. racemosa?*), and beaked hazel, the only hazel I saw in Maine.

July 28. *Tuesday.* As I remember, Hodge mistakes when he says[1] that "it is erroneously represented on the charts, for it extends in a north-northeasterly, south-southwesterly direction about twelve miles." He appears to be thinking of the easterly part. On the north side there is quite a clearing, and we had been advised to ascend the bare hill there for the sake of the prospect. . . .

Great trunks of trees stood dead and bare far out in the lake, making the impression of ruined piers of

[1] [Of Chamberlain Lake.]

a city that had been, while behind, the timber lay criss-a-cross for half a dozen rods or more over the water. . . .

We were glad to find on this carry some raspberries, and a few of the *Vaccinium Canadense* berries, which had begun to be ripe here.

July 29. *Wednesday.* I noticed there[1] *Aralia racemosa,* and *Aster macrophyllus in bloom,* with bluish rays and quite fragrant (!), like some medicinal herb, so that I doubted at first if it were that. . . .

I found on the edge of this clearing the *Cirsium muticum,* or swamp thistle, abundantly in bloom. I think we scared up a black partridge just beyond. . . .

I am interested in an indistinct prospect, a distant view, a mere suggestion often, revealing an almost wholly new world to me. I rejoice to get, and am apt to present, a new view. But I find it impossible to present my view to most people. In effect, it would seem that they do not wish to take a new view in any case. Heat lightning flashes, which reveal a distant horizon to our twilight eyes. But my fellows simply assert that it is not broad day, which everybody knows, and fail to perceive the phenomenon at all. I am willing to pass for a fool in my often desperate, perhaps foolish, efforts to persuade them to lift the veil from off the possible and future, which they hold down with both their hands, before their eyes. The most valuable communication or news consists of hints and suggestions. When a truth comes to be known and accepted, it begins to be bad taste to repeat it. Every individual constitution is a

[1] [Telos Lake.]

probe employed in a new direction, and a wise man will attend to each one's report.

July 30. *Thursday.* I saw thus early the slate-colored snowbird (*Fringilla hyemalis*) here. As I walked along the ridge of the island, through the woods, I heard the rush and clatter of a great many ducks which I had alarmed from the concealed northern shore beneath me. . . .

I heard here, at the foot of the lake, the cawing of a crow, which sounded so strangely that I suspected it might be an uncommon species. . . .

To a philosopher there is in a sense no great and no small, and I do not often submit to the criticism which objects to comparing so-called great things with small. It is often a question which is most dignified by the comparison, and, beside, it is pleasant to be reminded that ancient worthies who dealt with affairs of state recognized small and familiar objects known to ourselves. We are surprised at the permanence of the relation. Loudon in his "Arboretum," vol. iv, page 2038, says, "Dionysius the geographer compares the form of the Morea in the Levant, the ancient Peloponnesus, to the leaf of this tree [the Oriental plane]; and Pliny makes the same remark in allusion to its numerous bays. To illustrate this comparison, Martyn, in his Virgil (vol. ii, page 149), gives a figure of the plane tree leaf, and a map of the Morea," both which Loudon copies.[1]

Loudon says ("Arboretum," vol. iv, page 2323,

[1] [See *Excursions*, p. 280; Riv. 343.]

apparently using the authority of Michaux, whom see in my books) of the hemlock that "in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, the district of Maine, the state of Vermont, and the upper parts of New Hampshire, it forms three quarters of the evergreen woods, of which the remainder consists of the black spruce." (!) Speaks of its being "constantly found at the foot of the hills."

The events attending the fall of Dr. Johnson's celebrated willow at Lichfield, — a *Salix Russelliana* twenty-one feet in circumference at six feet from the ground, — which was blown down in 1829, were characteristic of the Briton, whose whole island, indeed, is a museum. While the neighbors were lamenting the fate of the tree, a coachmaker remembered that he had used some of the twigs for pea-sticks the year before and made haste to see if any of these chanced to be alive. Finding that one had taken root, it was forthwith transplanted to the site of the old tree, "a band of music," says Loudon, "and a number of persons attending its removal, and a dinner being given afterwards by Mr. Holmes [the coachmaker][1] to his friends, and the admirers of Johnson."

July 31. *Friday.* This morning heard from the camp the red-eye, robin (P. said it was a sign of rain), tweezer-bird, *i. e.* parti-colored warbler, chickadee, wood thrush, and soon after starting heard or saw a blue jay. . . .

I saw here my sweet-scented *Aster macrophyllus* (?) just out, also, near end of carry in rocky woods, a new

[1] [Thoreau's brackets.]

plant, the halenia or spurred gentian, which I observed afterward on the carries all the way down to near the mouth of the East Branch, eight inches to two feet high.

I also saw here, or soon after, the red cohosh berries, ripe, (for the first time in my life); spikenard, etc. The commonest aster of the woods was *A. acuminatus*, not long out, and the commonest solidago on the East Branch, *Solidago squarrosa*. . . .

P. said that his mother was a Province woman and as white as anybody, but his father a pure-blooded Indian. I saw no trace of white blood in his face, and others, who knew him well and also his father, were confident that his mother was an Indian and suggested that she was of the Quoddy tribe (belonged to New Brunswick), who are often quite light-colored. . . .

I got there[1] one (apparently) *Lilium superbum* flower, with strongly revolute sepals and perfectly smooth leaves beneath, otherwise not large nor peculiar. On this East Branch we saw many of the *small* purple fringed orchis (*Platanthera psycodes*), but no *large* ones (*P. fimbriata*), which alone were noticed on the West Branch and Umbazookskus. Also saw often the *Lysimachia ciliata*, and once white cohosh berries, and at one place methinks the *Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum* (?) with the other. . . .

On a small bare sand or gravel bar,[2] I observed that same *Prunus* which grows on the rocks at Bellows

[1] [Where he gathered lily roots, on the East Branch, below Bowlin Stream. See *Maine Woods*, p. 309; Riv. 384.]

[2] [On the East Branch.]

Falls, whose leaf might at first sight be mistaken for that of a willow. It is evidently the *Prunus depressa* (sand cherry) of Pursh, and distinct, as a variety at least, from the common allied one (*P. pumila* of Pursh), which is not *depressed* even when it grows, as it often does abundantly, in river meadows (*e. g.* Edmund Hosmer's on Assabet). The leaf of the former is more lanceolate-spatulate, and I have never seen it in Concord, though the *P. pumila* is very common here. Gray describes but one kind.

Jackson, being some miles below this, in the East Branch, the 6th of October, twenty years ago, says, "There are several small gravelly islands covered with a profusion of deep purple beach plums, but since they had been frozen they were found to be tasteless and insipid." We did not see any of these.

XIII

AUGUST, 1857

(ÆT. 40)

Aug. 1. I saw at the end of this carry[1] small *Apocynum cannabinum* on the rocks, also more of the spurred gentian. . . .

Here were many Canada blueberries and, on the rocks, a new *Allium* or garlic, with purple flowers, and the *Lobelia Kalmii*, both on bare rocks just below the falls. On the main land were Norway pines and a sandy soil, and *Bœomyces roseus* and *Desmodium Canadense*, — a new soil for this river.[2]

Aug. 2. *Sunday.* At a small river coming in from the south a few miles below Nicketow, the Penobscot is crooked and the place is called *Payt-gum-kiss*, or Petticoat, according to P.

Aug. 3. *Monday.* This was the midst of the raspberry season. We found them abundant on every carry on the East Branch and below, and children were carrying them from all sides into Bangor. I observed that they were the prominent dish on the tables, once a low scarlet mountain, garnishing the head of the table in a dish two feet across. Earlier the strawberries are

[1] [That mentioned on p. 314 of *Maine Woods* (Riv. 390).]

[2] [See *Maine Woods*, p. 315; Riv. 392.]

equally abundant, and we even found a few still deep in the grass. Neither of these abound about Boston, and we saw that they were due to the peculiar air of this higher latitude. Though for six weeks before leaving home we had been scarcely able to lie under more than a single sheet, we experienced no hot weather in Maine. The air was uniformly fresh and bracing like that of a mountain to us, and, though the inhabitants like to make it out that it is as warm there as in Massachusetts, we were not to be cheated. It is so much the more desirable at this season to breathe the raspberry air of Maine.

P. wanted to sell us his canoe. Said it would last seven or eight years, or, with care, perhaps ten.

It was P. who commonly reminded us that it was dinner-time on this excursion, sometimes by turning the prow to the shore. He once made an indirect but lengthy apology, by saying that we might think it strange, but one who worked hard all day was very particular to have his dinner in good season.

Aug. 4. *Tuesday.* A. M. — Rode to Pushaw Lake with Thatcher and Hoar.

Duck-meat, apparently a new kind, there. T. thinks there 's little if any red cedar about Bangor.

Aug. 5. *Wednesday.* To my surprise found on the dinner-table at Thatcher's the *Vaccinium Oxycoccus.* T. did not know it was anything unusual, but bought it at such a rate per bushel of Mr. Such-a-one, who brought it to market. They call it the "bog cran-

berry." I did not perceive that it differed from the common, unless that it was rather more skinny.

T. has four rude pictures which belonged to Reuben Brown, on which is printed, "*A. Doolittle sculpt,*" and these titles: —

"Plate I. The Battle of Lexington April 19, 1775."

"Plate II. A View of the Town of Concord."

"Plate III. The Engagement at the North Bridge in Concord."

"Plate IV. A View of the South Part of Lexington."

Plate II is like that at Mr. Brooks's. In Plate III (you look westward) what appears to be the old Buttrick house has the upper story projecting over the lower. The French (Hoar's) house appears on the left. Another house is seen on the right of Buttrick's (?), perhaps Jarvis's. There is a wall on the south or town side of the road, where the British stood, and a large upright tree on the south side there, at the Bridge.

P. M. — Rode to Old Fort Hill at the bend of the Penobscot some three miles above Bangor, to look for the site of the Indian town, — perhaps the ancient Negas?[1] Found several arrowheads and two little dark and crumbling fragments of Indian earthenware, like black earth.

Aug. 6. *Thursday.* A. M. — To the high hill and ponds in Bucksport, some ten or more miles out.

A withdrawn, wooded, and somewhat mountainous country. There was a little trout-pond just over the highest hill, very muddy, surrounded by a broad belt

[1] Willis puts it on the Kenduskeag.

of yellow lily pads. Over this we pushed with great difficulty on a rickety raft of small logs, using poles thirty feet long, which stuck in the mud. The pond was about twenty-five feet deep in the middle, and our poles would stick up there and hold the raft. There was no apparent inlet, but a small outlet. The water was not clear nor particularly cold, and you would have said it was the very place for pouts, yet T. said that the only fish there caught were brook trout, at any time of day. You fish with a line only, sinking twenty feet from the raft. The water was full of insects, which looked very much like the little brown chips or bits of wood which make coarse sawdust, with legs, running over the submerged part of the raft, etc. I suppose this pond owed its trout to its elevation and being fed by springs. It seems they do not require swift or clear water, sandy bottom, etc. Are caught like pouts without any art. We had many bites and caught one.

Aug. 7. *Friday.* P. M. — Take cars for Portland, and at evening the boat for Boston. A great deal of cat-tail flag by railroad between Penobscot and Kennebec. Fine large ponds about Belgrade.

END OF VOLUME IX

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